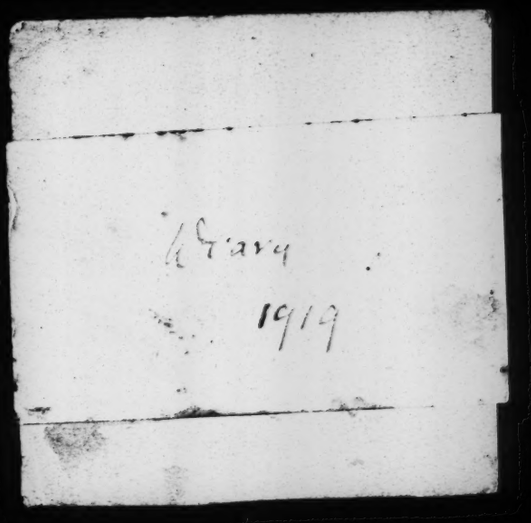
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Hogarth House
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Richmond.

January 1st 1919.

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1919

~~Mon. Jan. 20th 1919~~

I mean to copy this out when I can buy a book, so I omit the flourishes proper to the new year. It is not money this time that I lack, but the capacity, after a fortnight in bed, to make the journey to Fleet Street. Even the muscles of my right hand feel as I imagine a servants hand to feel. Curiously enough, I have the same stiffness in manipulating sentences, though by rights I should be better equipped mentally now than I was a month ago. The fortnight in bed was the result of having a tooth out, & having tried enough to get a headache – a long dreary affair, that ended + advanced much like a mist on a January day. One hours writing daily is my allowance for the next few weeks: & having hoarded it this morning, I may spend part of it now, since L. is out, & I am much behindhand with the month of January. I note however that this diary writing does not count as writing, since I have just read my year diary + am much struck by the rapid haphazard gallop at which it swings along, sometimes indeed jerking almost intolerably over the cobbles. Still of it were not written rather faster than the fastest type-writing, if I stopped to look things, it would never be written at all; & the advantage of the method is that it sweeps up accidentally several stray matters which I should exclude if I hesitated, but which are the diamonds of the dustheap. If Virginia Woolf at the age of 50, when she sets down to build her memoirs out of these books is unable to make a phrase as it should be made,

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I can only condole with her & remind her of the existence of the fire place, where she has my leave to burn these pages to so many black films with red eyes in them. But how I envy her the task I am preparing for her! There is none I should like better. Already my 37th birthday next Saturday is robbed of some of its terrors by the thought. Partly for the benefit of this elderly lady (no subterfuges will then be possible: 50 is elderly, though I anticipate her protest — agree that she is not old) partly to give the year a solid foundation, I must intend to spend the evenings of this week of captivity in making out an account of my friendships & their present condition, with some account of my friends characters; & to add an estimate of their work, & a forecast of their future works. The lady of 50 will be able to say how near to the truth I come; but I have written enough for tonight (only 15 minutes, I see) to resume; I admit I dont like thinking of the lady of 50. Courage however; Roger is past that age, a still capable of feeling, & enjoying & playing a very considerable part in life.

Wed. nd Jan. 22

Today is Wednesday, Jan. 22nd. Two days more were spent in bed, & today counts as my first of complete health. I even wrote a sentence & alterations & additions this morning. I have a book on Meredith to do for the Times, & we walked this afternoon, so I am again nearly in my old position. As I cant get up to London, & only see little framed pictures of Alix & Fredegond sitting by the fire here, I might attempt

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that solid foundation which I think desirable.

How many friends have I got? Thorn Lytton, Drummond, Jackson: they belong to the Cambridge stage of life; very intellectual; cut free from Hyde Park Gate; connected with Thoby; but I can't put them in order, for there are too many. Ka & Rupert & Duncan, for example, all come rather later; they belong to Fitzroy days; the Oliviers — all that set are stamped as the time of Brunswick Sq^re; Clive I put a little aside; later still there are the cropheads. Ally, Carrington, Barbara, Nick, Bunny. I must insert too the set that runs parallel but does not mix, distinguished by their social & political character, headed perhaps by Margaret & including people like Goldie, Mr Hamilton, & intermittent figures such as Matthaei, Hobson, the Webbs — no, I can't include either the Darkies, or Dr Jeyes, though they stand for the occasional visitor who lunches & retires to his room to talk seriously. I have not placed Ottoline or Roger, & again there are Katherine & Murry & the Cabaret of all, Hope Mirrlees, who recalls Pernel & Pippa & outlying figures such as Ray & Oliver. Gerald I must omit (& Mary Hutch. too) for reasons which of any account gets written I might give, & Eliot I liked on the strength of one visit & shall probably see more of, owing to her poems which we began to day to set up.

This is a very partial account; but I shall never place half of them accurately unless I start straight away. Lytton & Desmond & Jackson then. Well, I cherish a considerable friendship for each of them; the worst of it is how seldom we meet. With Lytton at Tidmarsh & Desmond till last month

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fathered to a stool in the Admiralty, months pass without a sight of them. The season of letter writing is over for all of us, I think, or perhaps we need different correspondents. Brilliant letters we wrote each other once partly for the sake of being brilliant, & we we were getting to know each other then, & there was a thrill about it (I speak of my own feelings.) But when we do meet, there is nothing to complain of. Lytton is said to be more tolerant & less witty; Desmond they say needs a glass of wine; Sayen has his rheumatics & his hopeless love affair. Lytton again is famous these last six months, but as that was a matter of course since his first six months there is not much surprise or change in it. Moreover, I hear he has abandoned his étiquettes or they are provided with some later light. Nothing is easier or more intimate than a talk with Lytton. If he is less witty, he is more humane. Presumably, judging from precedent — taking into account the demobilization of the army, he is now preparing to fly, but as his alliance is not with me the direction he flies in makes very little difference. I like Carrington though. She has increased her benignity. O yes, if he were to walk in at this moment we should talk about books & feelings & life & the rest get as freely as we ever did, with the sense on both sides I think, of having hoarded for this precise moment a great deal peculiarly fit for the other.

Friday 24th Jan.

Oddly enough, the day after writing this ~~letter~~ sentence I got into touch with Lytton, after a lapse of six months or so, on the telephone. She is to dine here next Friday. But to resume. There are three words knocking about in my brain to use of Stracheys, — a prosaic race, lacking magnanimity, thorn of atmosphere. As these words have occurred automatically, — will leave me till written down, I daresay there is some truth in them. All the unpleasant ness that I wish to introduce into my portrait of Lytton is contained in them, as if in deep wells. I shall only need one drop of this gall for her portrait, but I fancy a tinge of the kind is perceptible in him too — far more in James, Oliver & Marjorie. Roger's

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24th Jan.

Vernon is that all, except Lady S., lack generosity. It is an air, a vapour, an indescribable taste of dust in the throat, something tickling & irritating as well as tingling & stimulating. But then one must combine with this a great variety of mental gifts, & gifts of character – honesty, loyalty, intelligence of a spiritual order. One might almost attribute what I mean in Lytton's case at least to lack of ~~creative~~ physical warmth, lack of creative power, a failure of vitality warning him not to be spendthrift but to eke out his gifts parsimoniously, & tacitly assume his right to a superior share of ~~warmth~~ & comfort & opulence. In matters of emotion this has a slightly stingy appearance, nor is he ever unthinkingly generous & magnanimous, risking himself. Mentally of course it produces that metallic & conventionally brilliant style which prevents his writing from reaching the first rate, to my judgment. It lacks originality, & substance; his brilliant, superbly brilliant journalism, a supremely skilful rendering of the old tune. Written down these words are too emphatic & linear; one should see them tempered & combined with all those charming, subtle & brilliant qualities which compose his being in the flesh. But when I think of a Strachey, I think of someone infinitely cautious, elusive & unadventurous. To the common stock of our set they have added phrases, standards, & witticisms, but never any new departure; never an Omega, a Post Impressionist movement, nor even a country cottage, a Brunswick Square or a printing press. We Stephens, yes, & even Clive, with all his faults, had the initiative, & the vitality to conceive & carry our wishes into effect because we wished too strongly to be chilled by ridicule or checked by difficulty. Even in the matter of taking Tidmarsh Lytton had to be propelled from behind, & his way of life insofar as it is unconventional, is ~~to~~ so by the desire & determination of Carrington ~~[illegible]~~.

Thursday 30th Jan

Such is the cold today that I doubt whether I can go on with my disquisition. On such a day one would need to be of solid emerald or ruby to burn with any flame, & not merely dissolve in grey atoms in the universal grey. I saw no one in Richmond High Street who seemed to be burning

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Thursday 30th Jan.

with the intensity of ruby or emerald — poor pinched woman absolutely mastered by circumstances, though I did hear one speak of going home to get tea ready, which suggested the possibility of some individual life for her. A child ~~has~~ threw her hat into the area which I had to recover, & made a whole row of them laugh by tossing it up twice so that it fell into the area again; then the Poles require copies of the Jn R. to be sent to Paris; & here is Nelly to say two servants may call in to see me about Nessa's place. To my chronicle of Lytton I can only add that he writes to day to put us off, being fled to Tidmarsh, since "Calvé is ill, & cannot meet me at Heinemann's". What he should be doing with Calvé, I dont know; but the information thus vouchsafed, suggests — well, further speculations of mine upon fame, jealousy, vanity & so forth which I wait a more congenial season to unfold. Owing to this incubus of my friends I have said nothing of a visit from Alix, from Norton, from Fredegond, nor traced some rather interesting revelations or developments, which may bear fruit one of these days. Alix is thinking of taking a house in Gordon Sqr. "chiefly in order to live with James" she said; & this, as she announced it to L; me, & Saxon, had some quality in it that for the moment made my blood run cold. Now, to tune myself up I am going to shut Mrs Watts upon George Frederic, & open the Antigone of Sophocles. One second — I must note for future use, the superb possibilities of Freshwater, for a comedy. Old Cameron dressed in a blue dressing gown & not going beyond his garden for 12 years, suddenly borrows his son's coat, & walks down to the sea. Then they decide to proceed to ~~Can~~ Ceylon, taking their coffins with them, & the last sight of Aunt Julia is on board ship, presenting gouters with large photographs of Sir Henry Taylor & the Madonna in default of small change.

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Friday Jan 31st

Here I solace my restlessness as usual upon returning from the Club ~~by~~ upon this book. I visited the Omega, & heard Roger wheedling a fat German lady to buy stuff, & doing his best to be polite to Mr. Powell, an art gentleman who makes glass in South Kensington I suppose, & can believe. Thence through streets of frozen mud, snow, slush, slippery & congealed into little knobs like those on an astrachan coat, to the Club (& here I am interrupted by the voice of my dear old friend, Desmond, upon the telephone — 10 minutes discourse. Yes, he's taking a house at Oare, perhaps, & wishes us to be near him, & will come on Tuesday to bring a story, & is lodging at Littlehampton, & will subscribe to the Review, & send a flimsy for 10/- no, 12/- of ~~course~~ course, & they've let Wellington Square, & propose to ~~spe~~ live cheap & spend half the year in the country, which he doesn't much like, but there it is. Here, with sympathetic enquiries about my health & tooth, we ring off.) Yes, its sympathy that Desmond ~~lacks & we~~ has; & thus I'm switched back again to old Lytton. But old Lytton I must at once acquit of wishing to impress me with his Calvés & his Heinemanns; I think he mentioned a concert, & this is it. Let me try to account for the fact that he has 'dominated' (why, even the word is his) a generation at Cambridge, & make it square with my disparaging remarks. How did he do it, how ~~he~~ is he so distinct & unmistakable if he lacks originality & the rest? Is there any reputable escape from this impasse in saying that he is a great deal better than his books? or am I too chary of praise for those books? Am I jealous? Do I compare the 6 Editions of Eminent Victorians with the one of the Voyage Out? Perhaps there's a hint of jealousy, but, if I underrate, I think the main cause is that while I admire, enjoy up to a point & up to a point agree. I'm not interested in what he writes. Thomas Hardy has what I call an interesting mind; so have Conrad & Hudson; but ~~w~~ not Lytton nor Matthew Arnold nor John Addington Symonds.

Tues. Feb. 4th

But life hasn't

Life is getting crowded out altogether.

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Mes. Feb. 4th

been very enjoyable these last few days. Conceive a conspiracy of fog frost, strike on Tube railways, & on top of that servant hunting for Nessa. This last has ended disastrously. I heard Mrs. Abbey once more yesterday, matched my Phoebe Crane from the jaws of mistresses innumerable, only to hear now that she's not wanted, — must be put off with a pound note to solace her. This is the imposing pinnacle to my fortnights castle building with Budge & the rest; the cards fall down & things are as they were. Letters upon letters have been written in that bold hand & business like style unnatural to me, telegrams sent, Nelly entreated, brains ransacked, & journeys of penitente made with the result that 32/ is now scattered among undeserving people. But I must record a little sunshine today, less cold; & to balance that, the district railway on strike. Desmond has not rung up. That is quite a good preface to the description of his character. The difficulty which faces one in writing of Desmond is that one is almost forced to describe an ~~[illegible]~~ Irishman. How he misses trains seems born without a rudder to drift wherever the current is strongest; how he keeps hoping & planning, & shuffles along, ~~never~~ paying his way by talking so enchantingly that Editors forgive, & shopmen give him credit & at least one distinguished peer leaves ~~me a~~ him a thousand in his will.

Sat. Feb. 15th

What a disgraceful lapse! nothing added to my disquisition, a life allowed to ~~go~~ waste like a tap left running. Eleven days unrecorded. Still I think if I were a painter I should only need a brush dipped in ~~gr~~ dun colour to give the tone of those Eleven days. I should draw it evenly across the entire canvas. But painters lack subtlety: there were points of light, shades beneath the surface, now, I suppose, undiscoverable. The predominant tint was furnished by the need I was under of visiting Registry offices in the

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coldest weather of the year. It seems to me that I must have visited a
Dozen; three was in truth the utmost. But then one was on the
verge of civilisation, on the outskirts of Fulham; a few hard,
contained, & disillusioned the eyes of the women at the desk become,
as if glued in front of them they saw eternally a cook of
doubtful character! They can scarcely draw a veil of politeness
over them at the sight of me, dressed up in red velvet & fur for
their benefit. In the end somehow, Nelly had to go to
Charleston for a week, & Phoebe Crane recovered from her illness,
& was despatched there, so that peace is temporarily ~~not~~
renewed.

Yesterday, Friday, I had one of my occasional galas. Dressed in
my best I went to Sickerts pictures, which I here pronounce
the pleasantest, solidest most painter-like show in England.
& there I met Clive & Mary: Clive in his fur coat, Mary
in the more subdued style of the New English. Put a
yellow cave in Clive's hand, & hang a ribbon from an eye glass,
& he would step out of a sporting print — no, a caricature ~~in~~
~~for his painted~~ tinted with pinks & yellows. He introduced me
to young Nevinson, with the Prince Albert whiskers — making
allusion to our both being "such celebrated figures", which
Nevinson did not appreciate. Later, Clive, Mary & I
strolled chattering like a perch of ~~para~~ parrokeets, to Verreys,
with its blue paint & gilt devices. Mary had a dutiful
visit to pay her husband in hospital. So we sat &
talked in an inner room, — a pleasant, dissipated place,
parquet floor — curved bar, little tables — green & gold
flourishes, dilapidated George the 4th style, & empty
at this hour, save for some dubious ladies. We talked.
We vibrated in sympathy. We billed & cooed. Rosy
lights ~~at~~ shone on his cheeks. Our intercourse was very
gay, vibrant, like that of stringed instruments. Duncan
passed through — a strange shaggy interlude, but, always
& inevitably harmonious. He blinked as if newly

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Sat. Feb. 15th

Exposed to the light, crumbled his brioche, & gulped down his coffee, stammering out his half articulated but immensely expressive words; & saying, I remember, how Art & Letters was the dullest & drearest of papers ("I'll show it you — no, its not in that pocket — no, I don't know where it is".) & how Julian & Quentin were so much cleverer than most children. Somehow, too soon, he hoisted himself into an astonishing long straight black coat like a non-conformist minister, hitched down his red waistcoat, & started off in a vague determined way to Victoria station. And then we sat on, Clive & I, talking of writing, of my writing chiefly, which he praises sufficiently to give his strictures a good deal of force. As I half suspected, he found grave faults in that crude laboureis novel of mine; & excessive merits in the Mark: the best prose, he said, written in our day. Many came in & interrupted, or rather influenced the current of (for the hardly spoke) our discourse, & then we turned out into Regent Street where the lamps were lit, & the shop opposite had all its windows full of bright clothes against a green stage scene, & so strolling in the spring twilight & laughing still we made our way through Soho, & I left them, in a street with many jewellers windows.

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Feb. 18th
Tuesday

Here I set waiting for Alix, who can't be coming to disburden herself of confidences as I supposed; & thus my mind returns by way of her fickleness to my friends. Where was I? Desmond, & how I find him sympathetic compared with Strachey's. It is true; I'm not sure he hasn't the nicest nature of any one — the nature one would soonest have chosen for one's own.
I don't think that he possesses any faults as a friend, save that his friendship is so often sunk under a cloud of vagueness, a sort of drifting vapour composed of times & seasons ~~[illegible]~~ separates us & effectively prevents us from meeting. Perhaps such indolence implies a slackness of fibre in his affections too — but I ~~[illegible]~~ scarcely feel that. It arises rather from the consciousness which I find imaginative & attractive ~~of~~ that things don't altogether matter. Somehow he is fundamentally sceptical. Yet which one, after all, takes more trouble to do the sort of kindnesses that come his way? Who is more tolerant, more appreciative, more understanding of human nature? It goes without saying that he is not an heroic character. He finds pleasure too pleasant, cushions too soft, dallying too seductive, & then, as I sometimes feel now, he ~~[illegible]~~ has ceased to be ambitious. ~~He~~ His 'great work' (it may be philosophy or biography now, & is certainly to be begun after a series of long walks, this very spring) only takes shape ~~appears~~, I believe, in that hour between tea & dinner, when so many things appear not merely possible but achieved. Comes the day light, & Desmond is contented to begin his article; ~~[illegible]~~ & plies his pen ~~[illegible]~~ with a wag humorous hag melancholy recognition that such is his appointed life. ~~[illegible]~~ Yet this true, & no one can deny it, that he has the floating elements of something brilliant, beautiful ~~[illegible]~~ some book of stories, reflections, studies, scattered about

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Tuesday
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in him, for they show themselves indisputably in his talk. I'm
told he wants power; that these fragments never combine into an
argument; that the disconnection of talk is kind to them; but
in a book they would drift hopelessly apart. Consciousness of
this, no doubt, led him in his one finished book, to
drudge & sweat until his fragments were clamped together in
an indissoluble stodge. I can see myself, however, going
through his desk one of these days, shaking out unfinished
pages from between sheets of blotting paper, & deposits of
old bills, & making up a small ~~[illegible]~~ book of table
talk, which shall appear as a proof to the younger generation
that Desmond was the most gifted of us all. But why did
he never do anything? they will ask.

At any rate in his own intermittent way Desmond is faithful.
So much may affirm of Saxon too, who comes next on my list.
But Saxon's fidelity is almost that of the senile colley, or
broken down ass — the pensioner who can draw upon a
memory of the past for a seat at one's table in perpetuity.
His present condition makes him appear ~~almost~~ almost
exclusively in the character of almoner. He has little
to give at the moment, life has not been generous to him.
His possessions are old friendships, old memories — things
we've talked of ages ago. Unlike the rest of us he
has had no renewal of life in marriage; his hopes in
that direction have been crushed. Therefore he comes to me
disconsolately, grudgingly, ungenerously were the cause
~~his~~ not one ~~that this easy to sympathise with~~ beyond his reach, asking
rather than giving; asking at this moment that I shall
accept Barbara at his hand — return her to him enriched with
the glow of my approval. And Barbara does not
appear to me somehow of that metal — that rarity —
However, poor Saxon's life is now in the uncomfortable &

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Mes. Feb. 18th

unbecoming season which is so painfully well reproduced out of doors. Fleet, a mud a chill, a nothing growing; no warmth, no brilliancy, not even a modest domestic glow. Stagg in Great Ormond Street, has summed up his own position accurately as that of one who finds ~~loneliness~~ heinously lonely if alone, & bored if in company. But faithful — there is something worth having in Jason's fidelity, something that makes his most meagre visitation not altogether fruitless. One is aware, even after two hours of tepid & almost entire silence, that he is strictly true, genuine, unalloyed. You would never find him wanting; never find his callous insincere or grudging the last farthing of his possessions. Granted that he is not richly supplied with the gifts one might need, still I come to think in my weary age that safety — a modest competence — a truth as flawless as diamond or crystal — ~~none of this~~ is not negligible, nor without its exercise high flashes of high remote & beauty. At any rate I rest on the thought of Jason with some relief after hovering for the past ~~three~~ two months in a state of uncertainty over the thought of Katherine Mansfield. I might turn round what I have written of Jason in order to make a background on which to paint a portrait of Katherine. But at this moment extremely doubtful whether I have the right to class her among my friends. Quite possibly I shall never see her again. Hospitals I have letters in which she speaks of finding the thought of me a joy, dwelling upon my writing with excitement; I have letters making appointments, pressing for visits, adding postscripts of thanks for visits already paid. But the last is dated December, & it is now February. The question interests, amuses, & also slightly, no, very decidedly pains me. If it were not that I respect her & wish to produce precisely these emotions, save that

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of amusement, I should be still more put out. As it is — well I should need to write a long description of her before I arrived at my queer balance of interest, amusement, & annoyance. The truth is, I suppose, that one of the conditions unexpressed but understood of our friendship has been precisely that it was almost entirely founded on quicksands. It has been marked by curious slides & arrests; for months I've heard nothing of her; then we have met again upon what has the appearance of solid ground. We have been intimate, intense perhaps rather than open; but to me at any rate our intercourse has been always interesting & mingled with quite enough of the agreeable personal element to make one fond — if that is the word — as well as curious. I was at pains to go up to Hampstead every week since mid October or November, I suppose. And then what happened? I go away for Christmas, & we send small bright presents, carefully timed to arrive on Christmas day. I add to mine one if not two long & affectionate letters; I propose to come as soon as I get back. My time in bed prevented this. But meanwhile, for no reason given or to be guessed at with any certainty, she falls silent; I get no thanks, no answers, no enquiries. So respecting but willing to make every test before coming to conclusions, I asked Murry whether she would like a visit; to which he replied cordially & without the shadow of hesitation. I proposed to go ~~last~~ yesterday. About eleven she, or rather the female who keeps house, rang up & put me off, saying that K. M. was too unwell for my visit; but making no suggestion of another time, nor have I any word from her or K. this morning.

Fri Feb 21

But all this is made to appear rather fine drawn & exaggerated by the simple fact that I have a letter this morning from K. M. herself asking me to tea on Monday & explaining how some new treatment gives her fever for two days

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Fri
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21st

& makes it impossible for her to see people. Also I am asked to write for the Athenaeum, so that little scratch to my vanity is healed. Not that I want to review any more books than come my way already. But owing to my laborious, & it appears rather misleading, accounts of my friends life has been too much neglected. Let me recollect. On Sunday last Saxon & Barbara dined here; but did little more than dine, since she had to return to feed her ~~bad~~ baby. She came frisking into the room; but her mind is a sedate liberal mind; the pity is that she cant always be in a state of bodily frisk. That is her natural element, I'm sure; to expect quiet talk ~~or~~ ~~is~~ is against nature. Saxon watches her, judging I suppose that her charms provide for them both. I let myself in for a visit to Faith's; a tea, to see the Baby. Faith will shortly add to the race herself. A discontent is sound in me at this proceeding on her part. ~~is~~ I'm a human being ingrey; I scarcely feel that Faith will do us credit. She is a lax satirical woman, finding sharp things to say, & already at 28 possessed of a grievance. There she lounges over her fire arranging little mosaic patterns of all us in a peevish way, & making it appear that she has no other interest in life. One feels her mind a very magpies larder of gossip. Oh yes, she knew of my meeting with Hope Mirrlees; & informed me that she supposed I was one of these unstable friends, rejoicing in quarrels. She had apparently given the matter some thought. In contrast to her Barbara was very nice; direct, unaffected sympathetic, as far as her wits will carry her; & in some queer fashion of her own a personality. I wonder what this rises from. On the doorstep in the dark she hinted her concern for poor old Saxon. And then Saxon rang me up to apologise for not staying longer, & suggest another visit.

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Tues. Feb. 25th

Well, I haven't even quarrelled with Mivvles – my literary ladies are faithful, though intermittent, whether purposely or not, I don't undertake to say. But these speculations obliterate what I see I call 'life'. The truth is I think the gigantic task of giving an account of Sunday's tea-party, at which I met Sir Val. Chirrol, Sir Henry Newbolt, Lady Lady Cromer, the Bruce Richmonds, & a scattering of gallant bald cavalry officers, & mounds of South Kensington Dowager respectability who must be nameless. Sir Val & Katie both foretold a revolution, & seemed to picture themselves meeting death nobly for the principle of respectability at the hands of the Russian Jews. Russian Jews invent every great city – a people of enormous energy & unscrupulosity – & then, as Sir Val remarked, 1914 will never come again – "not that anyone could accuse me of pacifism".

Meanwhile Sir Henry confessed that music, especially the music of strings, moves the fount of poetry in him, & "something always comes of a concert – something will come this evening" – he assured me, as a priest foretelling a miracle, or a conjuror producing a rabbit. But the amiability of South Kensington is disarming. A kind of modesty veils what is so prominent & disagreeable in the intellectuals. They have an air of saying "I am no one – no one at all. My only function is to be agreeable. Another cup of tea? Do for goodness sake take this arm chair – & let me fetch you a slice of bread & butter –" That's my impression of the moment; though for some reason it doesn't encourage one to say anything more interesting than Thank you & please don't trouble. – & other phrases of the kind.

Of no 23 Cromwell House, fronting the stuffed beasts, & quite capable of starving them out of countenance, I will only say that it is

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furnished on the great South Kensington principle of being on the safe side & doing the thing handsomely. Good Mrs Samuel Bruce went to the Stereotype Company & ordered the entire Dutch School to be sent round framed in fumed oak. And so they were; & just covered the staircase walls, leaving an inch or two's margin in between. The drawing woman — no, I can't waste it all on; memory preserves only the shoulders of a horse on a gilt easel, & three large seascapes, like slabs of thick bread & butter. The company was delicious & fur bearing as usual; & the music like the voice of spirits in another world enticing the hopelessly damned. Sir Henry wrote a patriotic song to the tune of it. But how nice they are too! — Katie Rhouldering her way along the streets afterwards, & letting fall sentences of curious remote force, as though she were on top of a mountain, or lost in a mist, as I can't help thinking there aristocrats are. Not, however, Lord Eustace Percy. But at him my pen boggles, since I cannot delve any further back into the week. How modestly he started, smoking his pipe like any commoner, like poor rubber faced little Ewer himself, or wry-necked Burns & then by degrees how authoritative & masterly he became, — beat the table to make his points, & pulled his audience up short, & bade them "Wait a second", or asked them "Well. What would you suggest then?" What is your answer to that?" like some transcendent schoolboy head master, to whom the rest of us are but little children spelling out their lesson, very badly stumbling over the long words; & Lord Eustace, in his goodness, undertakes to enlighten them. I forget the impression of a very able man & a very aristocratic man, & a very nice man — a combination that merely is irresistible in its alarming. He explained the

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Mes.
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League of Nations draft.

Very well: but now we come to another of the ornate & decorated tribe; try as she will she can never lay aside her coronet; I mean poor dear old Ottoline. We dined at Gattis together last night. I fetched her from the family bosom of Garlands Hotel. She has the slim swaying figure of a Lombardy poplar — the ridges & hollows of the cheeks are the only sign of her years (47 I make them); & a feeble mincing step in the street, like that of a cockatoo with bad claws. She has an indomitable spirit - plucking life out with those same gouty claws as if she were young & had illusions by the ~~[illegible]~~ score. She had swooped down upon the land agents wife, & upon Rosa Allatini - for no reason save that the land agents wife writes novels, & Rosa Allatini has ~~been~~ had her novel burnt by the hangman. Allatini was a bad choice, save that she almost fainted & had to be fed on bath buns, which Ottoline had by her — & confided, of course, the story of her unhappy love, which made it necessary for her to be fed on Bath Buns. Birrell had been to tea, remarking how Queen Victoria liked nothing better than the sight of a drunken man; Lopokova had been discoursing all the afternoon. As we sat a dinner Ott picked up scraps of talk from the other diners, & admired their profiles. And so round to Gordon Square where we found Clive at the top of the house, where I used to stand & write, in the largest arm chair ever seen, by the finest fire, with a screen across the door to keep the draught out, as affable as a cockatoo & as brightly coloured as a macaw. I left them together & lost my train.

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Wed.
5th March

Just back from 4 days at Athelhampton one at Charleston; I sit
waiting for Leonard to come in, with a brain still running
along the railway lines, which unfits it for reading. But oh
dear, what a lot I've got to read! The entire works of
James Joyce, Wyndham Lewis, Ezra Pound, to be to compare
them with the entire work of Dickens & Mrs Gaskell;
besides that George Eliot; & finally Hardy. And I've just done &
sent Aunt Nessy, on a really liberal scale. Yes, since I wrote
last she has died, a week ago today to the day, at
Freshwater, & was buried up at Hampstead where 6 or 7
years ago we saw Richmond buried in a yellow fog.
I suppose my feeling for her is half moonshine; or rather
half reflected from other feelings. Father cared for her; she
goes down the last, almost, of that old 19th Century, Hyde
Park Gate world. Unlike most old ladies she showed
very little anxiety to die one; felt. I sometimes think, a
little painfully at the right age, as if we'd gone far off
& recalled unhappiness, which she never liked to dwell on
Also, unlike most old aunts she had the wits to feel how
sharply we differed on current questions; & this perhaps
gave her a tenure, hardly existing with her usual circle, of
age, obsolutness, & friction. For myself, though, the need
have had no qualms on this head, since I admired her
tenacity; but still the generations certainly look very
different ways. Two or perhaps three years ago L. & I
went to see her; found her much diminished in size,
wearing a feather boa round her neck, & seated alone
in a drawing room almost the copy, on a smaller
scale, of the old drawing room; the same subdued
pleasant air & the 18th Century & old portraits -
old China. She had our tea waiting for us.
Her manner was a little distant, a more than a
little melancholy. I asked her about father, &
she said how those young men laughed in a
aloof melancholy way" & how their generation

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was a very happy one, but selfish; & how ours seemed to her fine but very terrible; but we hadn't any writers such as they had. Some of them have just a touch of that snobbery; Bernard Shaw has; but only a touch - The pleasant thing was to know them all as ordinary people, not Great men -" And then a story of Carlyle & father; Carlyle raging he'd as soon wash his face in a Derby puddle as write journalism. She put her hand down I remember, into a bag or box standing beside the fire, & said She had a novel, three-quarters written - but Couldn't finish it - Nor, do I suppose it ever was finished. But I've said all I can say, Denny drop a little word, in the Times tomorrow. I have written to Heber; but if how I doubt the sincerity of our emotions!

Asheham was, I suppose, a qualified success only - at any rate for L: because of the discomfort much as it was was chiefly due to Philips presence. One Couldn't sink back before the log fire & read Shakespeare. That form of exalted egotism was checked, & I think perhaps Philip felt himself a little in hindrance, as no doubt, he always feels himself now - an outsider, a spectator; unattached, very lonely. Duncan came over involved in domestic difficulties, & gave him a letter to Mr ~~Hex~~ Heath the farmer, which he was to deliver yesterday morning, in the worst down pour of the year. But we had two lovely afternoons & evenings when I kept asking myself "Now where are we? What point have we reached? Is this spring or September?" waking with a start to the fact that we are launched on another summer. Those little grey green tassels were ~~at~~ decorating the wood, like the design on a Japanese screen. Stanley cut to fetch milk on one of these days we met Fanny & heard our fate - We're to go in September. He wants Asheham to live in with his old mother - Oh dear Oh dear! - Each time I walked up the drive I thought how nothing was ever so perfect - If it weren't for the devil of

Wed. 5th March

starting something new in me, I should be in despair. L. thinks it easy to make a fetish of a house; which is true; meanwhile we hang suspended. But the ~~question~~ need of looking for another house is a source of great pleasure. It drove us all along the Rodmell Road to Mr. Stacey's, & there we heard from a pair of drab females in a chaire that Mrs. Robinson of Ifford is going to let; so on we went, to Ifford, a thickly set little village on the plain; & found a house with three green columns, a stuffed up drawing room, & a Mrs. Robinson, made so L. declared & the numbers of her children attested, for breeding purposes. Art lamps & iridescent plates attached to the wall demonstrated the gentility of her farmer husband. Evidently they have made themselves very snug, & will want more than we can pay; even of the country there were better than this. On the whole we incline to airy at Ifford farm house — ~~Evidence~~ a house that could be made very attractive, with its view & its sun. We have grown out of gentlemen's houses.

Charleston is by no means a gentleman's house. I bicycled round there in a flood of rain, & found the baby asleep in its cot, & Nena & Duncan setting over the fire, with bottles & bibs & bagins all round them. Duncan went to make my bed. Their staff at this moment consists simply of Jenny, the sharp Jewish looking cook; & the having collapsed, spent the afternoon in bed. By extreme method & unselfishness & routine ~~the ho~~, on Nena's & Duncans parts chiefly, the dinner is cooked, & ~~[illegible]~~ innumerable refills of hot water bottles & baths supplied. One has the feeling of living on the brink of a move. In one of the little islands of comparative order Duncan set up his canvas, & Bunny wrote a novel in a set of copy books. Nena scarcely leaves the babies room, or if she appears for a moment outside, she

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has instantly to go off & talk to Dan, Jenny's young man & the future support of ~~A~~ Charleston, or to wash napkins, or bottles, or prepare meals. Mrs. B. & the children run rapidly to & fro between their rooms. I had an immense long talk with Ann about the health of the Persian Cat, which, according to Mrs. B. was fatally injured internally while being washed to cure it of nits, so that she demanded chloroform, which Nena refused, & the cat recovered. Then Quentin had just been suspected of measles. The atmosphere seems full of catastrophes which upset no one; the atmosphere is good humoured, lively, as it tends to be after three months of domestic disaster. In these circumstances, I daresay I had no more than 30 minutes consecutive talk with Nena, chiefly devoted to the great epic of the Dr. the nurse & Emily. But as happens after disaster upon disaster a sudden lightening of calamity appeared this morning: Dan & his mother being engaged, ~~a~~ a letter then arrived from a nurse who against all probability seems to wish to come if she may bring a friend. But I broke off in full tide, & had to trudge through mud to Glynde — such mud that when I went into Powell, the land agent, the sleek little clerk looked from my head to my boots in exportulation — as if such a figure couldn't possibly require a house with 7 bedrooms & a bath room. Unhappily there seems little chance of finding one. I've said nothing of my niece, who must be called so formally since they've cancelled ~~Ro~~ Susanna Paula, & can think of nothing else. She is a wistful, patient, contemplative little creature, examining the fire very meditatively, with a resigned expression, & very large blue eyes. I suppose not much larger than a big hare, though perfectly formed — legs thighs, fingers & toes — both fingers & toes very long & sensitive.

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Fri: March 7th

Having smashed my ink pot, I have recourse to safety pots again & purple ink I see dwells in this one; but I can't use with any effect the muffled respectability of a fountain pen. Yesterday I had a tooth out, to which the bag of a large abscess had attached itself. Harrison showed it me, previous to putting it in the fire; a token of much pain he said. The queen little excursion into the dark world of gas always interests me. I came home in the Tube wondering whether any of the people there suspected its existence. I ~~ca~~ wake from it, or seem rather to stop out get a leave it to go on hurtling through space while the world of Harrison & Mr Trueby engages my attention. "Open your mouth, Mrs Woolf — Now let me take out this little bit of wood." Suppose one woke instead to find the Derby himself by one's side! The Christians believe it, I suppose. L: has met an immense number of people these last few days; & I should have told how Sidney Webb finds his book a most remarkable piece of work, & how it is to be printed directly by Clark of Edinburgh & will be out, perhaps, by June. And my poor old Haggard, Night & Day, is to be taken in a parcel to Gerald, as soon as I can get through with these niggling, bothersome corrections. Lady Wolseley who seems a lady of the utmost distinction since she writes to the Editor of the Times in pencil, finds Le's memoirs of Aunt Anny 'most admirable', & the delicacy of his touches 'a proof of genius in him'. To balance this satisfactorily my article, according to B. R., is received with acclamation in the Office, at home, & in my Club. The Richmonds want to take a house for April & May — possibly we may consider letting them Asheham. If I had Le's experience I could here give a little story of the Coal Commission & Lloyd George behind the scenes. as reported by Mr Webb.

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Wed. March 11th

Sunday was one of my Shelley house afternoons. There I met Clive, & in his company I was less than ever in touch with the gathering — as dusky, fur-clad & discreet as ever, things I fancy that I am less impressed by it all than I was. & even take Shelley House more or less as an ordinary house. I had to talk to Elena about Asheham, & find her so slow in her mind, so accustomed I suppose to the position of an ornate & handsome ornament that she positively can't understand & sourries in her replies, as if she were a fat spaniel crossing a bury road. And her eyes are without depth. Clive gave me dinner at the Café Royal, which did not much interest me as a show, rather to his disappointment. However towards the end of dinner a woman of doubtful character dining alone with a man threw her glass on the floor, made a great rattle of knives & plates, upset the mustard pot & marched out like an indignant turkey cock. Was this moment, with the eyes of the diners upon her, what ~~she had~~ repaid her? Was it for this that she protested? Anyhow she left her man very crestfallen, trying to appear nonchalant; & I dare say that was what she wanted. I couldn't help thinking of the dreary scene in the flat next morning — the tears, the recriminations, the reconciliation — & next Sunday they'll dine, I suppose, at another restaurant.

Dining with Clive now I always feel that we mark the changes in our circumstances & views; our present is acted on a background of the past. ~~Yet~~ The present is more amiable, considerably gayer than the past; though not perhaps so interesting. His interest is different, rather, for I was interested in what he told me of Nessa & R. & id — & in what I could guess of his own attitude; so happy, so vibrant, so epicurean — & yet has he his moments of

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not exactly of disillusionment but of feeling that things might have been rather on a larger scale? I doubt it: I fancy he has found his level, hence his comfort.

On Monday I think we had a day of industry. We are coming to the end of Eliot's poems — but I've forgotten Saturday, when we had Margorie Strachey & the Thorers & Sayers to dinner. Sayers, like the sand in the oysters, was the origin of the whole pearl. We cannot quite face Sayers alone, & had recourse to telephone & telegraph to summon others. I doubt that he likes this. He wants more attention than one can give him in company, & he sits silent, outside the magic circle; no lure draws him in. To me the most interesting object that evening was Gumbo; instantly & undoubtingly I thought her changed. She has come to some decision; she has passed some stage. Doesn't Conrad say that there's a shadow line between youth & maidenly? Well, since I saw her last she has crossed it into the smoother greyer waters beyond. She has just had notice to leave her school on account of her short sight. In old days this would not have mattered much; she would have been on with something new; but when I spoke of her as the acrobat flying from trapeze to trapeze she shook her head: no that is all over. She now has two rooms in Kensington, lives on her earnings, comes home & is glad to be quiet there, glad to find that her charwoman has lit the fire — things haven't turned out well. Jack Jos's fault, I suppose. The prospect is dreadful than I could face in my own case. I begin to see, now, how my friends lives are shaping: it looks a little as if Margot were to be one of the failures — now that

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I rank marriage or success in a profession as success. Its an attitude of mind - the way one looks at life.

I must notice that though the sky is as black as water one has washed one's hands in, a bird is singing romantically - purposely at the window. On our walk today we passed almond trees in full flower. The daffodils are on the point of bursting. But so far I doubt if we've had one day of blue sky, or any heat; nor is there any shadow at dew, when the shade is universal. Last night Miss Fox, aged perhaps 26, earning her living, living on [illegible] with a friend, daughter of an Oxford don & Pippa's secretary, dined here & lectured the Guild on Equal pay. Leonard is preparing to dress for the first time since marriage in an assortment of clothes to dine with David Davies & Venizelos. This morning we had notice to quit from Hoper, & the further blow that he will not let us have the Farm.

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Sat. March 19th

Today was to have been the happiest of the week, & then among my letters was one from Duncan, which looked to me ominous, & proved of course to contain a demand for Nelly as soon as possible. What else but a demand is it when he says that Nena is becoming completely knocked up by incessant work & responsibility? So I have wired to say she will go if possible for 3 weeks; & the prelude to the wire was ~~unlawful~~ unpleasant, & the postscript will be still more so. For the moment this house represents a little island of refuge to the childbearers; Karin rang up last night to suggest that we should take Ann Judith & Mabel for a fortnight, which fortnight they are going to spend at Asheham! But no one can see how difficult it is to detach a cook is or to take in children when one's ~~one~~ organisation is framed on a different scale — however its enough to live one's disagreeably without writing them. Moreover we refused to take Mabel & Ann & Judith.

On Thursday Bruce & Elena dined here — rather an event. But it went off peaceably enough. They, at least, are well beyond the shadow line; I found him mellower & milder & less spruce than I expected, which pleased me in the admiring editor of my works. As for Elena her distinction in black with a jade jewel is undeniable; her white hair too, in the ~~sun~~ top of face coloured like almond blossom; & with all this stateliness & repose an air, if I mistake not, of melancholy, as of hopes not realised & acquiescence accepted instead of something warmer, which slightly touched me, guessing the cause of it. Her notes are very few. But she could discuss the Indian bill with L: & Indian religions; so that I daresay her slowness & apparent stupidity are only ~~because~~ that she finds herself out of her element with me. We talked, much about Asheham of course, & the evening passed ~~not~~ quietly, sedately — & with only one or two

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of those awkward pauses which I remember in their house.
He treats her rather as a large magnificent child. "O you'll
like that" he said when I offered her a bull's eye, & she told
me she had noticed a very nice sweetshop in the street.
I fancy that Bruce is a kindly & very unambitious man,
who has been quite pleased to spend his time in doing kindnesses
to poverty stricken young men & fitting the articles into the
advertisements in the supplement, which he says is not
such an easy job as it looks. "When the great catastrophe
happens" he said, alluding to Lord Northcliffe, "there is a
Walter who is going to buy back the Times, & make it
into a decent paper again." They went down to see
Arkham on Friday, but the result is not yet known to us.
L. is right I think in saying that Elena's place ought to be in
a big house in a village, distributing alms. I asked vaguely
for a compositor & the undertook very sedulously to find me
one, being in touch of course with various organisations.
On Friday I went to London & had tea with Mr.
Hamilton-Molloy that is: I had to correct myself half a
dozen times. L. has now got into the habit of lunching in
London twice a week, & so appearing the gaping maws of
Green & Matthew. Mary is in the next room & has
asked L. to do the social, I mean social reform, side of the
Nation. Athenaeum, pressing upon him a large yellow book for review
James has extracted the post of Dramatic Critic. Eliot
may be sub-editor. The first number comes out on April 4th.
There little bits of literary gossip strike me as slightly
discreditable. They point perhaps to one's becoming a
professional, a hack of the type of Mrs. W.K. Clifford, who
used to know exactly what every one was paid, & who
wrote what, & all the rest of it. I can see father listening

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with disapproval but secret enjoyment. Mrs Hamilton made me
feel a little professional, for she had her table strewn with
manuscripts, a book open on the desk, & She began by
asking me about my novel. Then we talked about reviewing,
& I was interested to hear who had reviewed Martin Schüler,
& was a little ashamed of being interested. She told me a
curious thing about the respectabilities going family - Adrian
had asked her to ask me how much he'd liked the Voyage Out,
which he has just read for the first time, & is too shy to
write & tell me so himself. She has 2 or 3 sisters, all
artists according to her, though the designs for stained
glass that I saw didn't seem to me to prove it; & one is a
poet, who surrounds herself with sketches & projected books
on every conceivable subject, & has written a long poem
which she wants us to consider publishing. "She is a poet -
certainly a poet", she said, which roused my suspicions.
The truth is that Molly Hamilton with all her ability to
think like a man, & her strong serviceable mind,
& her independent, self-respecting life is not a writer.
But we exchanged the plots of our novels, & said "How
very interesting —"

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Wednesday
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19th

Life piles up so fast that I have no time to write out the equally fast rising mound of reflections, which I always mark down as they rise to be inserted here. I meant to write about the Barnetts & the peculiar repulsiveness of those who dabble their fingers only approvingly in the stuff of others' souls. The Barnetts were at any rate plunged to the elbow; red handed if ever philanthropists were, which makes them good examples; & then, unquestioningly & unspeculatively as they were, they give themselves away almost to the undoing of my critical faculty. Is it chiefly intellectual snobbery that makes me dislike them? — is it snobbery to feel outraged when she says "Then I came close to the Great Gates" — or reflects that God = good, & devil = evil. Has this coarseness & grain any necessary connection with colour for one's kind? And then the smug rigour of their self-satisfaction! Never a question as to the right of what they do — always a kind of insensate forging ahead until, naturally, their undertakings are all of colonial size & portentous prosperity. Moreover, could any woman of humour or insight quote such paeans to her own genius? Perhaps the rest of all this is the adulation of the uneducated, & the easy mastery of the will over the poor. I find more & more I come to loathe any dominion of one over another; any leadership, any imposition of the will. Finally, my literary taste is outraged by the smooth way in which the tale is made to unfold into full blown success, like some ~~popular~~ prosperous peony. But I only scratch the surface of what I feel about these two thin volumes.

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Wed.
March. 19th

On Monday after many failures I met Murry at the Club & we had our talk about the Athenaeum. Success has already begun to do for Murry what I always said it would do. He is more freshly coloured, even in the cheeks, than when we last met; & his ~~speech~~ mind has its high lights. Why, he chuckled like a schoolboy; his eyes shone; his silences were occupied with pleasant thoughts, I think; not that he would admit that to edit the Athenaeum was much more than preferable to a ~~seat~~ place in a government office. He talked so much about his plans, & so with such zest that we sat there from 4.45 to 6.30, or past, & I had to rush. In fact I only caught my train owing to my skill as a psychologist. We were discussing his poetry, & his standing as a poet, with some intensity on his part, so that he lay back, & looked very intently at the ceiling. I was interested but quietly about dinner waiting. So I said "yes, its true waiting for one's own press is very pleasant — Now next week I have to take my novel to Gerald Duckworth —" "Ah" his eyes came down from the ceiling at once. "What's it called? — Oh yes — it'll be out in the autumn I suppose. Well, I'm knew I'm afraid I must be going."

Murry is much of a small boy still I think, in spite of his tragic airs. I suspect his boast will come true, the Athenaeum will be the best literary paper in existence in 12 months.

"What will you write Virginia?" he asked. Am I too modest in thinking that there was a shade of the perfunctory in the question? Anyhow I didn't persecute him with any degree of pressure. I offered to look in a Thursday sometimes & get a book; sometimes to suggest an article; he agreed quite cordially. We went over all his names, & tried to think of others, but agreed that

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once our intimate friends were gone through the field was mown of its Poppies. The younger generation promises very little so far. An editor naturally sweeps the young writers very carefully. I doubt that I was so much of an incubus to Richmond as I thought. While we were demurring a little to the idea of James as dramatic critic, the dramatic critic looked in & saw us. I recommended Desmond for the star part. Katharine will do 4 novels every week — pray to God she don't do mine! I feel the acid in her once more — since she doesn't take the trouble to write a card to fix an engagement; but I shall try to go up there tomorrow & judge the situation with my own eyes. Today we finished printing Eliot's poems — our best work so far by a long way, owing to the quality of ink. MacDermott has done Murry's poem with such blots & blurs that we must at any rate reprint the title page.

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Sat. March 22nd

Today among other things the coal strike is ~~over~~ postponed, & the Guards march through London. I: might have seen them, but thought it not worth the loss of this seat in the tube. Oh to ~~hear~~ private news, our new book case came — one part has been set up in the drawing room: the other is too large to get upstairs to my room. Further we have decided to take 2 cottages at Le Negurthen if we can get them; & this brings me to Katherine Murry from whom I heard of them. The miscreatable woman remains miscreatable I'm glad to say; no apologies, or sense of apologies due. At once she flung down her pen & plunged, as if we'd been parted for 10 minutes, into the question of Dorothy Richardson; & so on with the greatest freedom & animation on both sides until I had to catch my train. Perhaps it's I who live in the suburbs & think it necessary to answer letters; that would be a proper retort to my part of the underworld. But something — something dark & catastrophic possibly to do with Murry — [redacted] has taken place since we met. So much she hinted, but said she wished now to forget it. — something that had absorbed her, apparently. But this was a momentary revelation as I left.

Otherwise, as I say, we chattered about the Athenaeum mostly. I was much complimented to hear how much they wish for my writing, in proof of which I have a book this morning from Murry. And again, as usual, I find with Katherine what I don't find with the other clever women a sense of ease & interest, which is, I suppose, due to her caring so genuinely of so differently from the way I care, about our precious art. Though Katherine is now in the very heart of the professional world — 4 books in her table to review — she is, I will always be I fancy, not the least of a hack. I don't feel as I feel with Molly Hamilton that as day, ashamed of the inkpot. Before this I met Hope Mirrlees at the Club — a very self conscious, wilful,

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prickly, perverse young woman, rather conspicuously well dressed & pretty, with a view of her own about books & style, an aristocratic & conservative tendency in opinion, & a corresponding taste for the beautiful & elaborate in literature. For example, she had been examining Swift as to his use of words; whether he used them properly, & found him deficient compared with Burke, who writes from this point of view magnificently, though detestably from any other. She uses a great number of French words, which she pronounces exquisitely; She seems capricious in her tastes, & fond likes, & no more to be marshalled with the long score wand which I can sometimes apply to people than a flock of bright green parrokeets.

"Will you write to me, Hope?" I asked.

"O no. I cant write to people."

So we parted in the Charing Cross Road for the next six months, I suppose.

But to tell the truth what I'm thinking about most is neither Katherine nor Hope, but the two cottages at Higher Tregarthen. About now, I suppose, Captain Trout of St. Ives is opening my letter.

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Monday
29th March

Captain Tregarthen Short has now got my letter, & written me an answer, & even drawn me a sketch, & appears not only willing but anxious to let us have his three cottages, at a rent of £5 a year each. I have replied, also in the course of these last few days, that we will probably take them, & truth to tell, I have spent the greater part of the time on the slope beneath our house, which Leonard has already planted with fuchsias, or crouched on a rock, watching the great foam swirl of the waves. In a pessimistic walk by the river yesterday L: made this capacity for being happy first at Arlecham, then at Tregarthen, the text of discourse upon the illusory nature of all pleasures & pains; from which he concludes that mankind is a wretched tribe of animals, & even the works of Shakespeare no good save as his skill in doing it excites one's pleasure. Shall I own that I attribute some of this to my wretched family, who asked me up to dine with them, & I went? & also to Night & Day which L: has spent the past 2 mornings & evenings in reading? I own that his verdict, finally pronounced this morning gives me immense pleasure: how far one should discount it, I don't know. In my own opinion H. & D. is a much more mature & finished & satisfactory book than the Voyage Out; as it has reason to be. I suppose I lay myself open to the charge of niggling with emotions that don't really matter. I certainly don't anticipate even two editions. And yet I can't help thinking that, English fiction being what it is, I compare for originality & sincerity rather well with most of the moderns. L: finds the philosophy very melancholy. It too much agrees with what he was saying yesterday. Yet, if one is to deal with people on a large scale & says what one thinks, how can one avoid melancholy? I don't admit to being hopeless though = only the spectacle is a profoundly strange one; & as the current answers don't do, one has to grope for a

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new one, & the process of discarding the old when one is by no means certain what to put in their place, is a sad one. Well, I can't think yet, what answers do Arnold Bennett & Thackeray, for instance, suggest? Half-ones — satisfactory solutions — answers one would accept, if one had the least respect for one's soul? Now I have done my last odious piece of typewriting, & when I have scribbled this page, I shall write a letter Monday as the day for coming up to lunch with Gerald. I don't suppose I've ever enjoyed any writing so much as I did the last half of N. & A. Indeed, no part yet faced me as the Voyage Out did; — if one can face a interest promise anything good, I should have hopes that some people, at least, will find it a pleasure. I wonder if I shall ever be able to read it again? Is the time coming when I can endure to read my own writing in print without blushing — shivering & wishing to take cover?

Our dinner last night at the Isola Bella was rather a brilliant affair in the Bohemian style with a great deal of wine, & talk of books & pictures, & a general air of freedom & content — though I fancy that Roger — I was specially warned by Nessa not to let him know that the Duncans were in the bath — which casts some light on his point of view. At the end of dinner the Padrone, as we called him, (Clive chattered Italian with the greatest fun) brought a large sketch book, in which Nessa & Duncan & Roger all drew pictures, & we were rewarded by a bottle of Marsala. Then home, leaving Nessa & Roger in Fitzroy Street, with Clive Mary & Duncan following behind. We talked by the way as a great amount of Athenaeum gossip, all decently delightful with our own importance; Clive & Roger to do art criticism, the most brilliant list of contributors on record; & indeed I open this book again to record the fact that Murry has applied to me for a signed article, which I shall send him.

Eleanor Ormerod.

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Sunday
March
30th

I open this book today merely to note that Miss Eleanor Ormerod, destroyer of insects, promises well for Mamy: should he take kindly to my first [Eccentrics: I myself rather liked it] That note being made, L. not in yet from Staines I may add that I'm writing by the clear shrewd light of the sun, though its five minutes to the half past five. Last night we changed our watches. So the winter gloom is over, for which I am half sorry, since the dark evening over the fire has its charm. Moreover, should I look out of the window I should see snow in the garden. Yesterday morning the glare of white on trees & roofs when I drew the curtains was dazzling, surmounted too by a bright blue sky, as tender as June; but falsely tender, since outside one was scourged by the bitterest East wind, & I've not felt so cold this winter. Cold dashed in ones' face, & whirled up ones legs is far more cruel & harassing than a still profound frost. The Almond blossom is all gone, as if it were Cinderella when the Clock struck.

I went up to tea at Gordon Sqre on Friday, having first visited Spicer the paper makers in Upper Thames Street. Clive sat at tea; a little grumpy, growing bald, & now shewing a forehead rather in the style of Hall Caine. Very queer, as Nessa said, we all felt, united again in that drawing room as though it were 1907 again. & yet with so complete a re-arrangement of our parts. Perhaps we are all much happier; at any rate more secure & therefore tolerant towards each other. Then on to the Club, & dinner with the Shores & Marjorie, for whom of course I we paid, since they had all come out with no money — Gerald's buttons burst off too, & his coat come unsewn; & on again across half Mayfair, discreet & semi-lit, to the Club meeting — where my attention was drawn to a large picture, the Rape of the Sabines, I dare say, given by Edward Owenmith in memory of his devoted wife Elizabeth, a Christian mother who went home Feb. 1907 — I find it impossible to keep out thoughts about all sorts of things, & found that Marjorie listened attentively: but I can give no record of what happened, save that L. was elected again, 5th.

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Wed. April 2nd

Yesterday I took Night & Day up to Gerald, & had a little half domestic ~~aft~~ half professional interview with him in his office. I dont like the Club man's view of literature. For one thing it breeds in me a violent desire to boast: I boasted of Nessa & Clive & Leonard; & how much money they made. Then we undid the parcel, & he liked the title, but found that Miss Maud Annesley has a book called Nights & Days — which may make difficulties with Mudies. But he was certain he would wish to publish it; & we were altogether cordial; & I noticed how his hair is every blade of it white, with some space between the blades; a very sparkly sown field. I had tea at Gordon Sqre: Shepherd, Norton, Nessa, Duncan, & later Clive. The disturbing effect of the company is not so great as it was. Yet I feel that the presence of these very brightly lit brains makes things so swiftly, & without padding. And then they have different cups & saucers, & pictures on the walls, & new chair covers. Later I withdrew with Nessa, though to withdraw is very difficult owing to the regulations about coal. Much domestic talk; Lil offering herself, as it proves fruitlessly. Then dinner at the Bola Bella; talk with Clive & Duncan: Clive insisting that Eliot dislikes me, & further trying to convince in that Nessa, Roger, himself, Lytton & ~~me~~ I are the most hated people in London; superficial, haughty & giving ourselves airs — that, I think is the verdict against the ladies. I admit I hate not to be liked; & one of the drawbacks of Bloomsbury is that it increases my susceptibility to these shades, which are always made very visible by Clive, in so much that I can to have sulked a little under the suspicion that Murry has confided to Clive that he dislikes my article. Home to find L: in bed; a right to restore confidence. He had dined with Bob. Trevy, spoken at South Place, & performed other activities which I give no account of. I mean, he had been to the office, & the League of Nations, & the Labour party, so that between us our range was wide yesterday. Fowler is back again, & said by good Dutch Berry to be 'more serious!'

Thursday April 10th

A great skip, how accounted for I scarcely know. Writing hard at a Times article on words perhaps used up my desire for activity of the fingers; & then these last few days I've been submerged in Defoe; & only steal 10 minutes from Roxana to write this: I have to read one book a day in order to start on Saturday — such is the life ya back. I went up to tea with Janet, & noticed the signs of age in her; gentle old ladyish smiles, & turns of speech; for her age will be a profitable season. And the Eliots, Walter & Marjorie dined here on Sunday; I amused myself by seeing how sharp, narrow, & much of a stick Eliot has come to be, since he took to disliking me. His wife a washed out, elderly L Wom looking little woman, who was relieved to find Walter Lamb with his stories about the King provided for her; & indeed Walter seemed to both the ideal of manhood. Jumbo held forth in her most vivacious & commanding style. I tried to recover Faulker a nurse for hence & failed; went up to the Times on Monday & had an interview with Richmond — a restless vivacious little man, jumping onto a chair to see the traffic over the blind, & chivying a piece of paper round the room with his feet. He offered many suggestions about houses in Cornwall. Yesterday Desmond appeared, & told us the strange story of Elizabeth Asquith & Hugh Gibson. which I have not time to write down, but it is remarkable that 2 years ago she knew nothing of the physical side of the sexes.

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Saturday
April
12 14

There ten minutes are stolen from Moll Flanders which I failed to finish yesterday in accordance with my time sheet, yielding to a decree to stop reading & go up to London. But I saw London, in particular the view of white city churches & palaces from Hungerford Bridge through the eyes of Defoe. I saw the old women selling matches through his eyes; & the draggled girl skirting round the pavement of St James' Square seemed to me out of Roxana or Moll Flanders. Yes, a great writer surely to live thus imposing himself upon me after 200 years. A great writer — & Forster has never read his books! I was beckoned by Forster from the Library as I approached. We shook hands very cordially; & yet I always feel him shrinking sensitively from me, as a woman, a clever woman, an up to date woman. Fearing this I commanded him to read Defoe, & left him, & went & got some more Defoe, having bought one volume at Bickers on the way. Then to the Club; & met Alix, all in a new outfit to match the spring; brown too, & happier than usual, being new mistress of 41 Gordon Square where James is to lodge. Though she declares several dusky Brazilians have made their head quarters there. So home with L. walking over Hungerford Bridge on a fine warm evening & thinking of Defoe as I say. L. is now off to address the Cingalese; & Herbert Fisher has astounded us by asking himself to lunch tomorrow & we have been to Kew, & seen the Magnolia trees in bloom.

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Thursday
April 17/15

We saw the magnolia tree in blossom next day with the Minister for Education himself. He is a strange mixture of ascetic & worldling. The clean secluded man now finds himself dazzled by office, & with all his learning & culture swept away by men of vitality & affairs. Such a tribute as he paid to Winston might have been paid by some dappled moth to a lamp. He seems to see nothing clearly, or else some notion of responsibility for both keeps him to say what he thinks. His hums & haws when asked a plain question, a murmur on in a heady rout of whistles which seems bodiless & bleared as himself. His whole aspect is that of worn & half obliterated scholar made spruce by tailors & doing his best to adopt the quiet distinguished manner of those who govern. This is his official side. In private he is a kindly, even affectionate gentleman, temple by nature strongly tarnished either by Oxford or by his Father blood but with that a superficial manner which leads him to dally urbanely & in a way which belittles them with art & letters & everything but politics. This used to irritate - now it merely amuses me. He has long passed the shadow line, his sarcasms seem directed at phantoms. All clever official men, even poor old soldiers, seem mortified out of likeness to humanity; & impelled to babble on glibly & interminably as if they were under a perpetual contract to keep the high table amused. I do H.A.L.F the credit to say that he does not give himself airs, save those of a person rendered responsible through no particular merit of his own. We took him to Kew, a chatted of Oxford, Walter Pater, & how Chesterton is a genius, & George Moore another by way of relief from politics. And he approved of nature too, & likened the Thames beneath a shower to a picture in the Louvre. It stood still on the bank for some minutes, taking in the impression, not as a person who is accustomed to looking at things, but rather as a man who collects objects for the feel of his tone. So it was too with the buds of the magnolia at Kew.

He had Oliver & Ivey to dinner. As one of the couples they must be linked together then. What kind he is to her I did not find it easy to see. Animation perhaps, a kind of

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Thursday
April 17

brisk professional manners, & it appears that she had read ~~he~~ modern poetry & can deliver her opinions as if they were her own. I'm a little doubtful, when I find a cheap ready made young woman out of an office in Oxford Street & lodging at Harrow, enthusiastic about Robinson Crusoe; nor do I attribute it wholly to my intellectual snobbery. Her face, unlike the faces of all the other ~~B~~ Cropheads, seemed to me vulgar, & unpleasant. One must remember though that Oliver is now verging upon 50; a little grey at the temples; abrupt & inclined to be mappish; so that his choice is not so wide as it was. However one may abuse the Stracheys their minds remain a source of joy to the end; so sparkling definite & nimble. Need I add that I reserve the qualities I most admire for people who are not Stracheys? It is so long since I have seen Lytton that I take my impression of him too much from his writing, & his paper upon Lady Hester Stanhope was not one of his best. I could fill this page with gossip about people's articles in the Athenaeum; since I had tea with Katherine yesterday & Murry sat there mud-coloured & mute, livening only when we talked his shop. He has the jealous partiality of a parent for his offspring already. I tried to be honest, as if honesty were part of my philosophy. & said ~~wh~~ how I disliked Grantorto on whistling birds, & Lytton & so on. The male atmosphere is disconcerting to me. Do they distrust one? despise one? & if so why do they sit on the whole length of one's visit? The truth is that when Murry says the orthodox masculine thing about Eliot for example, belittling my solicitude to know what he said of me, I dent knuckle under; I think what an ~~ap~~ abrupt precipice cleaves asunder the male intelligence, & how they pride themselves upon a point of view which much resembles stupidity. I find it much easier to talk to Katherine; she gives & resists as I expect her to; we cover more ground in much less time; but I respect Murry. I wish for his good opinion. Heinemann has rejected K. M's stories; & she was oddly hurt that Roger had not invited her to his party. Her hard composure is much on the surface.

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Sun (Easter) 20th April

We are, for the first time for many years, spending Easter in London. We had arranged to go, but dissolved all our arrangements in 5 minutes; partly in to escape what was said to be the worst journey on record; partly that L. may get 10 clear days, which will be possible at the end of the week. I owe to some hopes ya west Easter; but was disappointed. Both Saturday Friday & Saturday were of the texture of full summer. We walked along the river, through the park on Good Friday, & the sun made the crowd to sweltter unpleasantly. They tramped placidly along, in their coats & skirts, bowler hats leading their dogs, save for a random terrier who had received a muzzle. Meanwhile the green of the leaves thrust at least one inch out of the envelopes, & today the tree against the window has some perfectly shaped small leaves, & the tree at the end of the garden is as green as it will be until September. On Saturday Bruce Richmond came in person to fetch my Dickens article; & we had a little talk about mistakes in proof. He prides himself upon letting none through his fingers; & charges such as do get through (& I was under the impression they were by no means rare) to Walton. And then we walked, & I came out in my summer things, shady hat, thin muslin dress, stockings, & cloak on my arm. Today I'm sitting in a jersey & serge over the fire; but the evening repents, & through an open window the birds sing, & the leaves are yellow green in the sun. L. at Haines.

In the idleness which succeeds any long article, & before it the 2nd leader this month I got out this diary, & read as one always does read one's own writing with a kind of guilty intensity. I confess that the rough & random style set off so ungrammatical, & need crying for a word altered, afflicted me somewhat. I am trying to tell whichever self this that reads this hereafter that I can write very much better; & take no time over this; & forbid her to let the eye of man behold it. And now I may add my little compliment to the effect that it has a Hazlitt & vigour, & sometimes hits an unexpected bulls eye. But what is more to the point is my belief that the habit of writing thus for my own

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Sunday: 20th April

eye only is good practise. It loosens the ligaments. Never mind the mirrors & the stumbles. ~~To~~ So going at such a pace as I do I must make the most direct & instant shots at my object, & thus ~~keep my eye~~ have to lay hands on words choose them, & shoot them with no more pause than is needed to put my pen in the ink. I believe that during the past year I can trace some increase of ease in my professional writing which I attribute to my casual haylooses after tea. Moreover there looms ahead of me the shadow of some kind of form which a diary might attain to. I might in the course of time learn what it is that one can make of this loose, ~~passing~~ dubbing material of life; finding another use for it than the use I put it to, so much more consciously & scrupulously in fiction. What sort of diary should I like mine to be? Something loose knit, & yet not slovenly, so elastic that it will embrace any thing, solemn, slight or beautiful that comes into my mind. I should like it to resemble some deep old desk, or capacious hold-all, in which one flings ~~a pall on~~ a mass of odds & ends without looking them through. I should like to come back, after a year or two, & find that the collection had sorted itself & refined itself, ~~as~~ coalesced such deposits so mysteriously do, into ~~the~~ a mould, transparent enough to reflect the light of our life, & yet steady, tranquil compound with the ~~irrevocable~~ aloofness of a work of art. The main requisite, I ~~[illegible]~~ think on re-reading my old volumes, is not to play the part of censor, but to write as the mood comes on of anything whatever; since I was ~~imp~~ curious to find how I went for things put in hophazard, & found the significance to lie where I never saw it at the time. But ~~loose~~ looseness quickly becomes slovenly. A little effort is needed to face a character or an incident which needs to be recorded. Nor can one let the pen write without guidance; for fear of becoming sleek & untidy like Vernon Lee. Her ligaments are too loose for my taste. But to return to life, albeit with something of an effort. I have forgotten to

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record Desmond's visit. His main purpose in coming was to see
himself a bad, but I can pardon there self seeking impulses in the
part of Desmond very easily. My tolerance in this respect is
far greater than poor Mary Thesperhanks', who remarked
bitterly that Rena she has gone to live at Golders Green her
friends pay her visits on Sundays, for the sake of the country
air. But then I am happy; & Mary J. is not; Every virtue
seems be natural to the happy, since they are the millionaires
of the race. I can give him account of Desmond, seeing that
I was under contract to work all the morning, & he
arrived late the night before. As L. had been kept by trains
failing from reaching home till £.45, he was out of time
for friendship. Desmond is a very sensitive man. He
apologized, & did his best to charm; & did so, in both our
cases, I think. But, sure enough, L's morning wasted
in the sun of his laziness; for though he took a chair into
the window & supplied himself with books, the books
started ideas, & the ideas had to be communicated, &
lying in my bath next door I heard fragments of Lord
Roberts' speech read from the Times; & then a discussion
upon the authenticity of Barbellion's diary; & then had
gone on, with an excursion to buy an A.B.C, since
breakfast. May we therefore be pardoned for inventing
a Mr Cook's sister, who was spending the holidays with
us; we sent this dear old Desmond would be smoking his
cigarettes & talking about catching a train in the
arm chair opposite at this moment. As it was,
he had reluctantly to take himself off at lunch time,
& fling himself upon a world of crowded trains,
& accurate hours; directing his steps towards Dare
where they have taken a house, which Molly is
engaged upon getting into at this moment. Desmond
declared that he had despatched a kitchen table to
her; but I own that I doubt it. And who can say
whether he has yet reached Dare?

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Thursday 24th April

On Easter Monday we went up to visit the Murry's & the Hampstead Heath. Our verdict was that the crowd at close quarters is detestable; it smells; it sticks; it has neither vitality nor colour; it is a ~~tep~~ tepid mass of flesh scarcely organised into human life. How slow they walk! How passively & brutishly they lie on the grass! How little of pleasure or pain is in them! But they looked well dressed & well fed; & at a distance among the canary coloured swings & roundabouts they ~~seem~~ had a the look of a picture. It was a summer day — in the sun at least; we could set on a mound & look at the little distant trickle of human beings eddying round the chief centres of gaiety & filing over the heath & spotted upon its humps. Very little noise they made; the large aeroplane that came flying so steadily over head made more noise than the whole crowd of us. Why do I say 'us'? I never for a moment felt myself one of 'them'. Yet the sight had its charm; I liked the bladders, & the little penny sticks, & the sight of two slow elaborate dancers performing to a barrel organ in a space the size of a hearthrug. Katherine & Mary & Murry's brother met us at their door. We thought she would have enjoyed herself, from the likeness of her prose to the scene; on the contrary, she was disgusted. We had rather a stiff tea. Mary's brother is a bumpkin; & the Rhodesian woman under a cloud of lacerated feelings I suppose; Katherine haggard & powdered; & so on. But it was no one's fault; & their talk of Tregerthen combined with the the image of it on a hot day made us determine to take it here & now. We have written to this effect to Captain Short. I try not to hope, since I feel sure we shall be disappointed. "Let it three days ago" or no answer at all; that is what I imagine.

Last night the Coles dined here, & gave me my first view of them. Sharp, positive, hard minds; intense ~~taught~~ taut bodies; in Cole's case the mouth seems fixed in a kind of snarl at the world. A positive domineering young man he seemed; & she, with less force, equally sure of herself. A good laugh would do them both good; yet how laugh with ~~that~~ those tight stretched drums for cheeks, & ~~that~~ those curled sneering lips? I don't accuse either of them of a desire to be savage

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or destructive: I wrote from the outsider's unsympathetic point of view. But Leonard, though he works at their works, is still human & deliberate. It's the perpetual strife that strings them up in this way, I think: no speculative or contemplative or imaginative power seems to be left them. And what's it all for? Who gains, even if they do win their victories. But I fancy that Mrs Cole is not a very clever woman; a rich wife has used up all their force in keeping nimble. She has nothing left over to play with. This I wrote from the recollection of them which came to me on waking. "I don't like the Coles" I said to myself, before I had time to set my faculties to work upon this judgment.

Tomorrow we go down to Asheham for 10 days; alone; leaving the servants to clean here, & intending to find a house for £35 if we can, for that is our solution at present. The weather has gone to pieces: the image is a true one; as much as if some serenely sailing ship had been wrecked on a splinter of rock, & left only tattered spars to be tossed in a welter of grey sea.

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Monday. May 5th

The day mother died twenty something year ago. The smell of wreaths in the hall is always in the first flowers still: without remembering the day I was thinking of her, as I often do. — as good a memorial as one could wish.

Now it is a fine evening the first since I wrote here last; & I'm just back from Asheham, Leonard still to come in. A fine but cloudy day; an immense weight of sun piled up behind the clouds. I race ~~so, to~~ though, so as to have time for a bath. Ah but how happy we've been at Asheham! It was a most melodious time. Everything went so freely; — but I cant analyse all the sources of my joy — & here's Leonard in, to find a stack of books from the New Statesman, & the drawing room floor littered with blue-black papers from Roger. Lottie & Nelly chattering away about their house cleaning.

Wednesday May 7th

& thus my writing got interrupted, but I had the hot bath I remember, after duly, though a little insincerely, admiring what had been done in my absence. To recapitulate the events of Asheham is no longer in my power, or perhaps, since they were mainly of a spiritual nature requiring some subtlety to relate, I'm too lazy to try. Happiness — what, I wonder constitutes happiness? I daresay the most important element is work, & that rarely fails either of us now. Leonard, of course, had his telegram from Sharp, & an article to do in a hurry; but 1500 words now merely fill a morning pleasantly for him. Then there were two moments of some anxiety: first, a letter from Captain Short to say we can have Mr. Tregarthen, which we now possess; then a letter from Gerald to say he has read Night & Day with "the greatest interest" & will be delighted to publish it. I suppose, as I go to the trouble of copying his words verbatim, that I was a good deal pleased by them. The first impression of an outsider especially one who proposes to back his opinion with money, means something; though I cant think of stout smooth Gerald sucking a cigar over my pages without a smile. However, a good deal beyond this letter in importance was Captain Shorts. For a day or two I did nothing but put my pen down or my book & see Tregarthen.

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Considering the extreme inhospitality of Eastbourne agents, I daresay we are well advised from a practical point of view, to be sure of some retreat. But Asheham, as if to keep our loyalty, breathed its usual charm. It compares very well with Charleston; indeed I've never come back to it without that feeling of being incredulous as one perfection was added to another. This time we spent most of our day in the house, owing to weather. L: scarcely left the garden. One walk insufficiently clothed to ~~Rodm~~ Southease was very bitter. I got over to Charleston, though; & had a night & morning alone with V: — so far as she can ever be alone. There was Fitcher, the new gardener; Angelica. Julian & Quentin of course; the new nurse; & a fire which wouldn't burn. Indeed living is fairly bare at the moment. Had the rare sensation of its being necessary to eat, in order to support life. They have bread by the yard, as if slid along a slot; ~~the n~~ all the necessaries; but not an ornament. My life, by comparison, seems padded at every turn. But they all looked as vigorous as possible. The floors strewn with Burnet stuffs for the Flat; & as usual, a good deal of domestic talk. Sleep in the groundfloor room at night. Where this time last year about I heard the nightingales, & the fishes splashing in the pond; white roses tapped at the window. That night when I was told that Angelica was in evidence. Nothing but wind & rain, this time, & no coal in the house. Yesterday, Tuesday, was both renewed London life in the ~~usual~~ usual way; save that I had to buy stuff for dresses, as well as paper labels & glue. Tea at the Club, when Alix, dusky & dreary, borrowed 10s in order to give James his dinner. They were going to hear Bertie lecture; I preferred the songsters of Trafalgar Square. The steps of the column were build up, pyramid fashion, with elderly respectable householders grasping sheets of music, which they rendered, intime to a conductor on a chair beneath, with great precision. It was Life boat day, & the elderly people were singing sailor's chanties & Tom Bowling. This seemed to me a very amusing & instructive spectacle; & being famished for music, I could not get part, but stood & felt thrilled with an absurd visionary excitement; & walked over Hayesford Bridge making up stories.

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Monday
May 12th

We are in the thick of our publishing season: Mary, Eliot, & myself are in the hands of the public this morning. For this reason, perhaps, I feel slightly but decidedly depressed. I read a bound copy of Kew Gardens through; having put off the evil task until it was complete. The result is vague. It seems to me slight & short; I don't see how the reading yet impressed Leonard so much. According to him it is the best short piece I have done yet; & this judgment led me to read the Mark on the wall, & I found a good deal of fault with that. As Sydney Waterlow once said, the worst of writing is that one depends so much upon praise. I feel rather sure that I shall get none for this story; & I shall mind a little. Unprained, I find it hard to start writing in the morning; but the dejection lasts only 30 minutes, & once I start I forget all about it. One should aim, seriously, at disregarding ups & downs; a compliment here, silence there; Mary & Eliot ordered, & not me; the central fact remains stable, which is the fact of my own pleasure in the art. And there must of the spirit have other causes, I expect; though they are deeply hidden. There is some ebb & flow of the tide of life which accounts for it; though what produces either ebb or flow I'm not sure.

But I have written nothing here for a week, & must cramp myself even now, in order to cut some more covers. Monday was written down; on Friday I had tea with K. M. & Murry, with whom I now adopt a manner of motherly badinage; which is less fatiguing than the intellectual pose. He has not yet shed all the husks of clever youth. One feels him very unformed essentially, & capable of running on in an excited uneasy state about life such as I can recall in my own past. One tacitly assumed it to be a mark of genius. On Sunday Margaret & Lilian dined here; Margaret tending to be the flowing matron; she increases in size; & one can fancy her fitting a large arm chair, & reluctant to move. They seriously consider resignation. Lilian, M. whispered is getting beyond unfit for so much work. Poor Janet is depressed at having lost her job, & being fit for no other, & also very hard up. Indeed this is a melancholy season for them all; but J. has more than the usual shadows to depress her. I laughed to myself over the quantities of Armenians. How can one mind whether they number 4,000, or 4,000,000? The feat is beyond me.

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Friday
May 16th

These warming hot summer days seem to quicken human life as well as vegetable. One becomes a flower oozing honey upon which ones friends cluster — or such is my version of the relationship. This week we've had Ottoline, & Leyton, & I've been to tea Violet Dickinson. — tonight the Abrahamsons or Oliver Strachey's dine with us; on Saturday Logan comes to tea; on Sunday we lunch with the Webbs, to say nothing of invitations we've refused, & leaving [redacted] a great square at the 17 Club to hear Forster ~~read~~ speak on Egypt, when we met Bob, Altounyan, & Dora Sanger, with the usual varieties of old friends. As usual my mind is too crammed to sift all these waves. Let me attempt Ottoline, since her hat & veil on the sofa beside me recall her. She was, I think L., was right in saying, anxious to come out & inspect us. She struck her unmistakable note on entering the room; vaged with green & blue like the Cornish sea, & magnificently upright & held together; her blue blood giving her the carriage of assurance & self-respect which is rare among the intellectuals. We have taken, this last week, to dining in the garden, & there we sat on the flawless summer night with the apple & trees softly snowed under with blossom, & a moon up certain layers of powder showed upon the Ottoline's face — but when you reflect that she's close on 50 — & has cropped her hair like a boy's. Of course we talked personalities; investigated the core of Mary Hutch. & Eliot; & old Gentler; & she was apparently, & as I believe, genuinely, Kindly, & well wishing. Though considerably bewildered, & bewailing as usual her disasters in friendship, & inclined to blame everyone but herself, though anxious for reconciliations, & plaintive rather than bitter. Her verdict was that she was "very nice"; the first time he has ever said that. The qualities which one has glimpsed in company were steadily visible in this domestic evening, when there was nothing to stimulate, & no effort to rise to.

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Friday.

Her intuitions are more penetrating than many of the profoundly reasonable remarks of our intellectuals; & to me she always has the pathos of a creature vaguely afloat in some wide open space, without support or clear knowledge of its direction. Perhaps she was on her good behaviour — but if so, she was capable of wrapping herself in her great Spanish cloak, & sallying out into the street without her hat; this altogether such a fancy dress character that a hat more or less seems immaterial. We put her into her train with young officers who looked up startled, & despatched her to Waterloo.

Next day there was Lytton. I need not repeat the stock observations upon his mellow good humour. It is more to the point to chronicle a renewed sense of affection, which has never been seriously in abeyance, & the usual conviction that his wit & what one calls personality are as peculiar to himself as his voice, or his finger nails. And then one thinks that it doesn't much matter if his writing is not profound or original; one begins perhaps to suspect that it may be more original than one thinks. He tells his stories of Lunards & Winston & Lord Ribblesdale admirably; with marjorie dramatic talent, & with a finer power of observation. We scrutinised the condition of his soul, with his help, very closely. Ottoline had professed some alarm. We came to the conclusion that it would be absurd not to have this butterfly's reason among the great. The ~~contr~~ comparison between him & the select Norton, Alix, & James seemed entirely in his favour. The touchstone of virtue with them now is whether you attend Bertie's lectures or not. I hereby vow to fiddle Alix completely. We sat on the river bank, & he told us of a visit to Irene Vanbrugh, with his comedy; how the singing of her canary birds almost drowned his voice; & how finally she determined against it, finding a lack of human passion. Therefore the comedy is shelved, for ever, I suspect, & he writes, & will continue to write Eminent Victorians.

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Friday 2 May 18

Perhaps there was a little melancholy at this confession; perhaps a little desire for commendation of Lady Herbert Stanhope, which was ~~withheld~~ withheld; or perhaps I judge other writers' craving for applause by my own. I've had Rogers praise of Kew Gardens by the way, so I suppose I'm still safe, though no longer greeted with such exciting raptures. Indeed the books sell very slowly; & it looks as though the market for such commodities is a small one — infinitesimal; we shan't even pay our expenses it seems. But with such a variety of makes to choose from, this can scarcely be the fault of the books themselves; it was novelty that sold them at first. I broke from Lytton with regret, & paid my visit to Violet; but she would have been hurt had I shirked it, to judge at least by her pleasure at seeing me. Its odd how people of 50 remain exactly 50. She has n't changed a hair for 20 years, which must be the length of our friendship. We take things up precisely as we left them; a years gap makes no difference; we have had our intimacy; something or other has fused; & never hardens again. Thus I felt in talking to her; it was the usual inconsequent, generous minded, unselfish talk. When I come into the verge of the respectable classes I'm always struck by their unexpectedness: V. is as much of a democrat as I am; as little of an Imperialist; she blames ~~Germany~~ England; she has no hate of Germany; she sends clothes to Runca; & yet she lives in Manchester Street, consorts chaffing with people like the Horners & the Thynnes, & has Ozzie for a brother. Beatrice Thynne has inherited a quarter of a million; two large properties, & one of the finest libraries in England; she has no idea what to make of them; visits them in a distracted way to see which she'd like to live in; can't make up her mind to settle in either, & finally spends most of her time in Grays Inn, looked after by a charwoman. Her only acknowledgement of her balance is that now & then she puts out strings of pearls, & parades the squares of the Inn, with such effect that Lady H. Somerset has to beg her to remove them.

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Sunday
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Over seductive sweetness appears still to be drawing bees from all quarters; last night I went to bed with lips so parched with talking & brain so dazed that I could only tumble into sleep head foremost. As we left lunch & were on the stairs there was a great rapping at the door & the hall immediately filled with strangers, who eventually became Roger Parnell & a strange silent foreign woman whom from her grey hair I took to be Marjorie Fry. We perched in the grass, under a shower of apple blossom, & there sat until tea; & then Logan came; & we only fell silent at half past six or even later; nor was there a moment of repose, neither for tongue nor brain. It is true that Logan does his turns, which take the form of "delightful adventures — life is like the Arabian Nights —" & good stories, quotations & recitations; but even these required intelligent attention. He is a very well brushed, bright eyed, rosy cheeked man, seemingly entirely satisfied with life, which he appears to have mastered, visiting each with flowers, like a bee. These flowers he keeps stored in his waistcoat pocket. Lines from Jeremy Taylor, Carlyle, Lamb, &c. An Epicurean, I suppose: a little frosty, I conjecture; though kindly & humane of course, rather than human. I believe his motive was to get us to print some new works of his; anyhow he welcomed the invitation to submit them: & he lavished offers of help, & suggestions for increasing our sales; & altogether took the Rogarth Press in hand, & promised us a most splendid future. He proposes to become our agent. One must beware of becoming satellites of his set, however; cherishing single lines, & reprinting the Essays of Elia.

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Monday May 22nd

A few vegetable notes ought to prelude this page: the weather continues fine; the blue seems eternal; an occasional wind rises: we rock slightly; then steady ourselves, & ride on serenely. The apple blossom, which deluged Ottoline & looked so soft beside her cheeks, is over; 2 red rambler roses are pricking through. We dine of course out of doors to the sound of the fountain. The robins douche themselves there. Last night there were six voices to drown its perpetual dreffing — Altounyan, A. & K, & Bob dining with us. I had a vision of Bob as a tory squire; at any rate a conservative, mahogany coloured gentleman, innocent of rhyme. How far this is from the truth may be gauged from the fact that he swells with four separate volumes, & is to be delivered in the autumn. The good shrewd round Trevelyan stock shows through: moreover he is well cropped & brown for a poet. He is also a comic character, & rises higher in that sphere when he feels himself inspired by laughter. His ungainly compliments to Karin, his eager awkward ways, made us all shout with laughter. Altounyan is an effervescent Armenian, shy, but ready to bubble on provocation either of a literary or political nature. But Bob talked us all down. I must omit an exquisitely flattering duet between me & A: when I had a surfeit of praise for Kew Gardens — the best prose of the 20th century, surpassing Mark on the wall, possessing transcendent virtues, save for one passage, between the women, & highly admired by Clive & Roger. I was at pains to sweeten his enthusiasm with this relish, since his native product is not ~~very~~ of the very highest quality perhaps. Yes, authors are rather a despicable race I think. I'd composed myself to face failure so stoically that this unexpected gift was, at the moment, delicious. Forster approves too. But Altounyan has weighted his praises with a thick wad of mss:, written, not typed, which we are to read & consider, & upon ~~what~~ our verdict depends the whole of his future. Further, he appointed us his literary executors; everything he writes in Armenia is to be sent to us — to do what we like with. He gave

as E2. towards our future. Well, to read a novel in manuscript, & settle a young man's future, & his wife's, & his children — that is a severe price for 10 minutes of praise. A: seemed to me to deserve Henderson's saying "He knows the right sneer for every occasion." He strikes me as more & more yes moon to the lusty red sun provided by Karin; & the light he throws upon whatever turns up is more & more bleaching & cadaverous. The truth is he has no occupation.

Sunday 25th May

The day recalls the fact that we lunched with the Webbs this time last week. I have made no note of it. There was the weak distinguished looking & yet vaguely apologetic Noel Buxton; & Arnott, rather self assertive, on the contrary owing everything to his wits, & without an ounce of distinction thrown in. I cannot get over my distaste for the Fabian type. Though if it came to spending a year on a desert ~~to~~ island, I suppose I should ~~to~~ choose him rather than Buxton. I don't know. The Webbs were very quotable. Mrs Webbs ~~f~~ brilliant idea of municipal bricks for children, inscribed with the names of organisations so that in putting them together they would learn their civic duties was almost too much in character to be suitable. Even Sidney had his mild joke at her. Noel Buxton obsequiously offered his son for the experiment. Rich men nowadays can be seen diverting themselves of particles of gold with a view to the eye of the needle. Then later in the week Mrs Woolf & Sylvia came to tea, bringing fresh eggs & lilies of the valley. Sylvia amused me by her assurance that the affairs of Putney are of moment to the world; & her anxiety to get stories of her own house hunting adventures connected — as though these were matters of importance. And Mrs Woolf, as usual, pleased me by her childishness, by which I mean her freshness & inconsequence, as if all her life were still spent among the little incidents & goings on of a large nursery. She couldn't face a play, she told me; but she could put

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25th May.

manage lunch at the Carlton. ~~Where~~ Why the boundary line of between the impossible comes there I don't know. And Bella Mrs Berkin death finds life necessary to keep up her spirits; & is learning to Jogg; & her eyes prevent her from reading much; but she writes her page in Little Folks; & her friends are all very good to her. — She has gone to Rexhill with Martin & Emma. It is predicted that Martin will be made not quite a knight but the next best thing. Martin believes in orders, I gather, & our laughter at the O.B.E must have saddened him the other night. Philip is cutting off lambs tails, & they are made into a pie at night — Philip who would step aside to avoid a caterpillar, & once fought Harold for using worms for bait, — was chased by Harold to the next village in the Isle of Wight where they were staying "& I ran after them, miles & miles, thinking the end of the world had come!" Naturally Mr. Woolf had no time to read Sophocles — Nor have I for the matter of that. Lytton came to tea on Friday. Self maliciously assured me that my industry amazed him. My industry & my competence, for he thinks me the best reviewer alive. & the inventor of a new prose style, & the creator of a new version of the sentence. People's compliments generally manage to reserve the particular praise they wish to have themselves. But we are surprisingly honest; we have a clear perception of the others meaning. He asserted that he was disgusted by his own stereotyped ways; his ~~to~~ two semi colons; his method of understatement; & his extreme definiteness. Without agreeing, I conveyed my sense of his dangers, — urged him to write plays — Stories — anything to break the mould of the early Victorians. After a volume on Victoria, in the same manner, he is going to attempt it. But then money — he must make money — he can't write reviews — & I've to do Addison, & other books, & protested that all the same I'm not a hack, & he

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29th May runs the risk of becoming a Logan, ~~an~~ a superior dilettante. To which he agreed, & then we talked about Addison, & read scraps of Johnson's lives; & so enjoyed ourselves. He told me about Princess Sophia & the D. of Cumberland.

To the Squire's party.

Monday 9th June (Whit-monday) I knew I meant to convey very sense of the degradation of the Squire's party; but the sense ~~of it~~ has faded, & is not worth recapturing. A week at Asheham has intervened — from one Tuesday to another. An odd thing happened to me at Asheham, where I count upon become clearer & more concentrated, & reading print as if through a magnifying glass. The very opposite of this took place. I dozed & drowsed & seemed to feel the sun in my brain rending up my thought, to seek repose in the shadow. I wrote there at an open window looking into the field; & the field was gilt with buttercups ~~dandelions~~; the sheep were tempting in their indolence; in short, I used to find the morning gone & only a few lines written, & so it was with my Addison, or whoever it might be after tea. Our ship rode so steady that one came to disbelieve in motion or the possibility of change; we appeared wedged in the blue. Perhaps one day there was a cloud; but no harbourage was offered it, & congregation of clouds ~~was~~ impossible. The loveliness of Asheham once again brimmed the cup & overflowed. Wild ideas seized us of building a house at the Lay. To give up every foothold in that region seemed unthinkable. L: bicycled round & brought news of an ancient manor house at Denton, which excited hopes, but ~~complete~~ the sight of it next day completely dashed them. In order to popularise this large staffy, ill lit, slightly anoxidy & decayed mansion the owner, a London publican dazzled into purchasing by the aristocratic name but unable to induce his wife to live there, hit on the ambitious plan of starting a line of omnibuses

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to run from London, & deliver their loads at the manor house, where tea would be provided. One such feast was held, as long boards stretched on trestles, & a few dozen green wine-glasses testified; but the device failed; the Londoners had seen more seductive rights than Edenton Manor, & it is still in the market. With the notion of building a house ~~at~~ running strong in my mind I went to Charleston for a night & was there disabused of such fantasies very completely. To recapitulate a story told verbally several times would be dull. But Nessa & I quarrelled as nearly as we ever do quarrel now over the get up of Kew Gardens, both type & woodcuts; & she firmly refused to illustrate any more stories of mine under those conditions, & went so far as to doubt the value of the Hogarth Press altogether. An ordinary printer would do better in her opinion. This both stung & chilled me. Not that she was bitter or extreme; its her reason & control that give her blame its severity. Anyhow I left in rather a crumpled condition, & paused in Lewes, on Lis advice, to see a house on the hill. A degree of that ~~wet~~ refinement & smug efficiency which one finds in Surrey houses set me against the White House; & I trudged down into Lewes again in no cheerful mood, with three hours, moreover, to spend there. To pass the time, more than anything, I asked Mrs. Wycherley about houses; & she, after tepidly recommending some that were impossible & sketching the difficulties of the situation, bethought her of one newly on the market, small, old, actually in Lewes, & perhaps a little humble for one used to lodge at Asheham. I pricked my ears; since this is always the way one is told of what one wants. Off I went, up Pipes Passage, under the clock, & saw rising at the top of the sloping path a singular shaped roof, rising into a point, & spreading out in a circular petticoat all round it. Then they began to go a little quicker. An elderly

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Monday
9th June.

and humble cottage woman the owner, showed me over. How far my satisfaction with the small ~~to~~ rooms, - the view, & the ancient walls, & the ~~[illegible]~~ wide sitting room, & the general oddity & character of the whole place were the result of finding something that would do, that one could conceive living in, that was cheap (freehold £300) I don't know; but as I inspected the rooms I became conscious of a rising desire to settle here: to have done with looking about; to take this place, & make it ~~[illegible]~~ one's permanent lodging. Perhaps later it will amuse me to read how I went from one grade to another of desire; till I felt physically hot & ardent, ~~as of~~ ready to surmount all obstacles. I liked the way the town dropped from the garden leaving in on a triangular island, vegetables one side, grass the other; the ~~round~~ path encircling the round house amused me; nor are we overlooked. In short I took it there & then, being ~~the [illegible]~~ egged on by Wycherley's hesitation & hints of a purchaser who had already asked for the refusal. Lewes that afternoon, with its may trees & laburnums, & water meadows, & sunny bow windowed homes, & broad High Street looked very tempting & dignified. The end glue story, which I must curtail, is that we have bought the Round House, & are now recur of a lodging on earth so long as we need sleep or rit anywhere.

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Monday
10th June

I must use up the fifteen minutes before dinner in going on again, in order to make up the great gap. We are just in from the Club: from ordering a reprint of the Mark on the Wall at the Pelican Press; & from tea with James. His news is that Maynard in disgust at the peace terms has resigned, kicked the dust of Office off him, & is now an academic figure at Cambridge. But I must really ring my own praises, since I left off at the point when we came back from Asheham to find the hall table stacked, littered, with orders for Kew Gardens. They strewed the sofa, & we opened them intermittently through dinner, & quarrelled, I'm sorry to say because we were both excited, & opposite tides of excitement coursed in us, & they were blown to waves by the critical blast of Charleston. All these orders – 150 about, from shops & private people – come from a review in the Lit Sup. presumably by Logan, in which as much praise was allowed me as I like to claim. And ~~[illegible]~~ 10 days ago I was stoically facing complete failure! The pleasure of success was considerably damaged, first by our quarrel, & second by the necessity of getting some 90 copies ready, cutting covers, printing labels, glueing backs, & finally despatching, which used up all spare time & some not spare till this moment. But how success showered during those days! Gratuitously too, I had a letter from Macmillan in New York, so much impressed by the Voyage Out that they want to read Night & Day. I think the nerve of pleasure easily becomes numb. I like little sips; but the psychology of fame is worth considering at leisure. I fancy one's friends take the bloom off. Lytton lunched here on Saturday with the Webbs, & when I told him my various triumphs, did I imagine a little shade – instantly dispelled, but ~~not~~ before my rosy fruit was out of the sun. Well, I treated his triumphs in much the same way. I can't feel gratified when

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Mes. 10th June

he expatiates upon a copy of Eminent Victorians lined & initialled "M" or "H" by Mr & Mrs Asquith. Yet clearly the thought produced a comfortable glow in him. The luncheon was a success. We ate in the garden, & Lytton sported very gracefully & yet with more than his old assurance over the conversation. "But I'm not interested in Ireland —"

Sat. 14th June

The weather seems unbreakable. A delphinium is out today in the garden & one Sweet William; Lottie was discovered brushing the grass with a hearth broom, as though attending to the coat of some pet animal. They say the strawberry crop will be ruined. This is a serious matter for us as we have just bought 60 lbs. of sugar, & had arranged a great jam making. Strawberries are 2/ a lb. at this moment. Asparagus 6d a 7d, & yesterday at Rays I ate my first green peas. I had a ~~gree~~ Hampstead field day; first the Murrys, then Adrian & Karin, & finally dinner — it was 8.30 by the time I got it — with Ray & Dorothy Bussy. A very severe review of Murry, a severe review of Eliot appeared in the Lit. Sup. on Thursday. Considering their general slackness, I don't see why they chose to come down so hard upon Murry; & I wish they hadn't. I attribute the extreme depression of him & Katharine at least partly to this. And I felt gorged & floored with my comparative success. Poor Murry pretended not to mind, but much like a small boy sticking it out that caning doesn't hurt. A poem is a very sensitive part to be beaten. But Katharine looks so ill & haggard that I suppose health may make a great part of her depression. She is going to San Ras Remo for a year in September. Murry means to live alone in the country. I don't see how, ~~they~~ all this being so, they can look forward to their future. And then there's the question of Katherine's waiting. Isn't she a little querulous & restless about that? Standing emphatically yet not quite firmly on her rights as an artist; as people do who must insist upon being one

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In token of this she told me a long & to me rather distasteful story about her dealings with a man called Schiff, who wanted her to contribute to art & letters, & dared to offer her advice, upon which she got on her high horse, & wrote him such a letter that he replied humbly — in a style that I couldn't make anything of, & indeed the rights & wrongs of the whole business escaped me though I protested, I'm ashamed to say, to that I share Katharine's indignation. What a fraud one is in many ways! But then of ones in this gooseing of being fellow artists & all that one's relations are queered from the start. Anyhow I went off rather somber leaving them to their spare lonely meal, nothing seeming to grow or flourish round them, leafless trees.

Wednesday June 18th

I went off, as I now remember, to call on Adrian, as I was early for Ray; & found that strange couple just decided to become medical students. After 5 years training they will, being aged 35 & 41 or so, set up together in practise as psycho-analysts. This is the surface bait that has drawn them. The more profound cause is, I suppose, the old question which used to weigh so heavy on Adrian, what to do? Here is another chance; visions of success & a busy, crowded, interesting life beguile him. Halfway through, I suppose, something will make it all impossible; & then, having forgotten his law, he will take up what — farming or editing a newspaper, or keeping bees perhaps. I don't see that it matters at all so long as they always have some carrot dangling in front of them. Dinner with Ray; talk with Dorothy Bussy of her part; promise of her play, & so home with L. who had dined higher up with Margaret. That morning ~~I got the~~ (~~the~~ Friday 13th to be exact) I got the first proofs of my novel. I've now had 64 pages.

On Sunday we planned to go to Kew & have tea there, but Logan ranges up, & we came home to see him. More stories, a little less carefully told & so more to my liking; & then we came indoors, & he read us his stories.

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Wed. June 18th

from the bible. At this moment we have the following manuscripts or promises of manuscripts. Paris by Hope Mirrlees. Novel by Altounyan. Stories by Logan. Play by D. Bung. Ray Grandmother's sexual-religious experiences. And Old Bob caught Leonard last night at the dinner & pressed upon him a translation of Lucretius. What steps were to take is not at the moment clear to me. Whether to become a shop, or remain a small private press — whether to get help or refuse it. Logan of course, has a charming young man up his sleeve. How futile these elderly people are! There's Maurice Baring gone & printed one copy of an ~~all~~ anthology at a cost of £40 to give Lady Diana Manners for a present — & she ~~being~~ ~~so~~ is one of those vaguely literary people who "sometimes read Shakespeare." Logan approves of this on the whole. He likes to supervise these literary undertakings, & would even give money, but doesn't want to be disturbed out of his habits. He is printing several anthologies himself in the autumn. "I consider that I've done my bit" he said, with a comfortable sigh, after saying that he had been correcting the proofs of these works. He now goes yatching for a holiday. Yesterday, Tuesday, I was treated to ices at Gunters by Clive. It was all the same as before. Little tables: long rather dark shop: numbers of gilt chairs; discreet buffet; elderly waitresses in black; & couples scattered all about silently, or almost silently, absorbing ices & sugared cakes. There was an aristocratic small boy got up like a picture of Queen Victoria as a child, with a great sash, & a bow, & a hat wreathed in roses. His mother had brought him in, we thought, from one of the great Berkeley Square houses. Then there was yonder, by some misadventure not at Ascot: a coffee-coloured young man, & a semi-transparent girl. We strolled out of this solemn cave & sauntered through the purest 18th Century London to the Green Park where

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Wed June 18th

we sat on hard green chairs, & watched people passing ~~over~~ down the little slope towards the Palace. This being, I suppose, the 6th week without rain the grass is already haycoloured & slippery. We gossiped, speculated, & reminisced. Very easy, agreeable talk to my mind, & then what an age I've knew him! How much we've been through side by side — there infrequent meetings are little islands upon which one stands surveying the flood racing away in the past, looking out over the future, safely & with very little anxiety just at present. He talks of going to Paris in the autumn, to see what's on; & he's given up his book & finds that articles of 2,000 words exactly suit him. He thinks of subjects in his bath. He makes money. He spends it on ices & dinners at the Café Royal. He dines out every night, enjoys every moment, & feels his senses quicker & stronger as time goes on. We agreed in finding life very delightful though very different for each one. Home, to await Miss Barbara Lynch, but she never came. The meeting talked to its hearts content. Mrs Whitty & another pressed me for copies of Kew Gardens. But I don't want them to read the scene of the two women. Is that to the discredit of Kew Gardens? Perhaps a little. I've just been there in the flesh, & sat under a tree, reading the Way of all Flesh, which I have to review tomorrow. According to Fredegond there's been a crisis between Alix & James. The tried to break with him; failed; went reeling off to Tidmarsh in what state of mind I don't quite know, & there is it at the moment. James inhabits Gordon Sqre —

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Mon. June. 23rd

If I had it had since midday to settle myself, I should still be twanging & twittering with Gassington. But parties don't flusher me as they used. I don't much care now about the great question of hair, & doing up dresses; I am resigned to my station among the badly dressed, though Grace & her vagaries, & the speeding up of my blue dress, & doubts as to its beauty scarcely seem to confirm that statement. Here, I think, the great & at present rose question of ~~aces~~ aesthetic taste subsides in. Why am I rose, calm & indifferent as to what people say of Night & Day, & fretful for their good opinion of my blue dress? However this may be, I enjoyed Gassington saying to myself "The worst moment will be when I come into the drawing room in my blue dress before dinner." I planned thus to get dressed quick & come in before Ott: which is not difficult as Ott. never ~~comes~~ gets dressed quick. Mercifully I need not face Gassington squarely & draw its picture. I observed that the sealing wax red drawing room is a good deal smaller this visit than last, & last visit than first. That's what happens to people too. There was young Lord de la Warr walking among the roses & cabbages, a boy of 19, who after sweeping mines as a seaman is now a socialist under the guidance of Lansbury. But I took a ~~to~~ good look at him & noticed the straightness, & his body ease, & certainty of his manner which mark him out from Gertler quite emphatically. Gertler & Nelson strolled up another garden path. Nelson one of the insignificant, I should say, who has attached himself firmly to the comforts of Garsington. His anxiety to accept an invitation to dinner proved his relish for that one of Ottoline's bounties. The population was floating & changing. Goldie & I were permanent; ~~Ad~~ Aldous H. came for one night. I shall leave out several names of I try to count them. Young Lord de la Warr said very little; but I think he would have impressed an American, a good manners conciliate me. I think Goldie was the principal element in the week end.

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that is to say that he took upon him the brunt of Sunday morning, & meal times; 3 hours sitting on a hard seat with Ott. & me, Philip sometimes, Gertler occasionally, & Aldous off & on was a trial; but for us all it was well surmounted. I did not guess the time once. When Philip suggested a visit to the pigs I was ready but not over-ready. I think we discussed Roger most carefully & Forster, & Bob. Ott. needled away at her embroidery, Philip's bedspread, losing her needle once, & crouching on all fours behind the seat, while Goldie & I went on talking. This seemed to me to typify her modest position; so long as people talk she doesn't much want to interfere, & the listens, especially if people's characters are discussed. She had worked off the great Picasso grievance upon Goldie; I had only vague lamentations, & aspirations for my share.

Yet it struck me as strange

Thursday July 3rd

What struck me as strange? I can't now remember or even guess; perhaps I meant to finish by trying to define the sense of purposelessness which now & then ~~appeared~~ went before me — suppose we do settle exactly what Roger's character is, & ~~how~~ what degree of spite to allow Clive, & how far Logan has a heart — well, what then? Are we going nowhere? Does the Mist move with us? Well — this is too far gone for recapturing, though there was a queer enough sequel a day or two later at ~~Gar~~ Asheham. We went there on the Thursday following, & came back yesterday. I can't give much space to Philip's letter though, seeing how many matters I must despatch; & how, to purify my mind, I must have a brush with the Ajax before L. comes in. Philip's letter was all about my lack of heart & his terror of me; to which I have regained if I'm Bloomsbury you're Mayfair"; to his bewilderment, as I hope. But this is moonshine. The solid fact is that we own, besides the Round House, Monks House at Rodmell, with three quarters of an acre of land.

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July 3rd

We saw Monks Home (this is almost the first time I've written a name which I hope to write many thousands of times & before I've done with it) for ever. It happened thus. As we walked up the steep road from the station last Thursday on our way to inspect the Round House, we both read out a placard stuck on the auctioneer's ~~house agent's~~ auctioneer's walls.

Lot 1. Monks Home, Rodmell. an old fashioned house standing in three quarters of an acre of land to be sold with possession. The sale was noted was on Monday, to take place at the White Hart. "That would have suited us exactly" L. said as we passed, & I, loyal to the Round House, murmured something about the drawbacks of Rodmell, but suggested a visit to the place; & so we went on. I think a slight shade of anti-climax had succeeded my rather excessive optimism; at any rate the Round House no longer seemed so radiant & unattainable when we gained it as owners. I thought L. a little disappointed though just a perfect queen to its merits. The day lacked sun. The bedrooms were very small. The garden not a country garden. Anyhow it seemed well to plan a visit to Rodmell on the following day. I bicycled over against a strong cold wind. This time I flatter myself that I kept my optimism in check. "These rooms are small, I said to myself; you must discount the value of that old chimney piece & the niches for holy water. Monks are nothing out of the way. The kitchen is distinctly bad. There an oil stove, no fuel. Nor is there hot water nor a bath, & as for the E.C. I was never there at." These prudent objections kept statement at bay; yet even they were forced to yield place to a profound pleasure at the size & shape & fertility & wildness of the garden. There seemed an infinity of fruit bearing trees; the plums crowded so as to weigh the tip of the branch down; unexpected flowers sprouted among cabbages. There were well kept rows of peas, artichokes, potatoes; raspberry bushes had pale little ~~pyramids~~ of fruit;

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July 3rd

& I could fancy a very pleasant walk in the orchard under the apple trees, with the grey extinguisher of the church steeple pointing my boundary. On the other hand there is little view — O but I've forgotten the lawn, smoothly rolled, & rising in a bank, sheltered from winds too, a refuge in cold & storm; & a large Earthen pot holds sway where the path strikes off, crowned with a tuft of ~~pu~~ purple ~~mauve~~ samphire. One pot; not two. There is little ceremony or precision at Monk House. It is an unpretending house, long & low, a house of many doors; ~~& on~~ on one side fronting the street of Rodmell, & wood boarded on that side, though the street of Rodmell is at our end little more than a cart track running out on to the flat of the water meadows.

There are, if memory serves me, no less than three large out houses of different kinds, & a stable; & a hen house — & the machinery of a granary, & one shed full of beams of ancient oak; & another stored with pea props; but our fruit & vegetables are said to flow over each summer into these receptacles, & to need selling; though so obliging in its prolific way as to flourish under the care of a single old man whose heart is of gold, & who, for 40 years I think, has ~~fr~~ spent his spare time in tending these trees for the late Mr. Jacob Newall — All this made a hashy kind of jumble in my brain, together with the store of old fashioned chairs & tables, & glass & furnitures with which every inch of room space is crowded; I came back — told my story as quietly as I could, & next day L. & I went together & made a thorough inspection. He was pleased beyond his expectation. The truth is he has the making of a fanatical lover of that garden. It suits me very well, too, to ramble off among the Telscombe downs, when fine; or tread out my paces up the path & across the lawn when dark or wind blown. In short, we decided walking home to buy if we could, & sell Round House, as we conjecture we can. Eight hundred we

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July 3rd

made our limit, which, according to Wycherley, gave us a good chance of possession. The sale was on Tuesday. I don't suppose many spaces of five minutes in the course of my life have been so close packed with sensation. Was I somehow waiting to hear the result while I watched the process of an operation? The room at the White Hart was crowded. I looked at every face, & in particular at every coat & skirt, for signs of opulence, I was cheered to discover none. But then, I thought, getting L. into line, does he look as if he had £800 in his pocket? Some of the substantial farmers might well have their rolls of notes stuffed inside their stockings. Bidding began. Someone opposed £300. "Not an offer, said the auctioneer, who was immediately opposed to us as a smiling courteous antagonist, "a beginning". The next bid was £400. Then they rose by fifties. Wycherley standing by us, silent & unmoved, added his advance. Sixhundred was reached too quick for me. Little hesitations interposed themselves, but went down rather dismally fast. ~~We reached~~ The auctioneer egged us on. I doresay there were six voices speaking, though after £600, 4 of them dropped out, & left only a Mr. Tattersall competing with Mr Wycherley. We were allowed to bid in twenties; then tens; then fives; & still short of £700, so that our eventual victory seemed certain. Seven hundred reached, there was a pause; the auctioneer raised his hammer, very slowly; held it up a considerable time; urged & exhorted all the while it slowly sank towards the table. "Now Mr. Tattershall, another bid from you — no more bidding once I've struck the table — ten pounds? five pounds? — no more? for the last time then — Dump!" & down it came on the table, to our thanksgiving — I purple in the cheeks, & L. trembling like a reed — "Sold to Mr. Wycherley." We stayed no longer. But we went into the High Street, & very nearly quarrelled over the address of Rogers House.

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Tuesday July 8th

We went on, however, L. to Ashham, & I to Charleston, where there was Maynard, & a good deal of brisk talk. He is disillusioned he says. No more does he believe, that is, in the stability of the things he likes. Eton is doomed; the governing classes, perhaps Cambridge too. These conclusions were forced on him by the dismal & degrading spectacle of the Peace Congress, where men played shamelessly, not for Europe, or even England, but for their own return to Parliament at the next Election. They were not wholly vicious; they had spasms of well meaning; but a fate seemed to possess the business from the first, driving it all in the most fatal direction & soon no one had the strength to resist. He resigned, & is now a don at Cambridge, daily rejecting profitable offers made him by houses of business, willing, according to Duncan, to pay £4,000 a year for his attendance for a short time daily. We all came up to London early next day, Nena having to see a Mr Cholmondeley about Julian's Education. We had an afternoon's gaiety at the Ballet, & then went back to Gordon Sqre, everything a little glittering & unreal, as usual after the country & in Nena's presence.

Friday, the 4th, I went to tea with Katherine, since I begin to feel my visits numbered, how seriously I dont know, but once she gets abroad what's to bring her back? Mary, poor man, pale & sad as usual, for she is again only just out of bed. The weather of course is taking its revenge now for a season of generosity. We have fires every night. Worse than the cold is the drab coloured sky, so that one's whole existence seems to be in the shadow.

On Saturday we saw the horse show; I had a look at Queen Alexandra's poor old effigy, still painted like a wildrose, though she is about 75, & can only hobble up a ladder like a decrepit workerwoman. Its only on the face that the pretence can be preserved.

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July 8th

On Sunday Mrs. Hamilton brought her sister — "the poet" — to dinner. I almost laughed at the sight of her. The stumps, peering & hesitating, into a room, shakes hands with emphasis, & displays a small round pale face, with wisps of brown hair controlled by a tight band of ribbon. A mixture of schoolgirl & German professor to look at; awkward & restless in manner; & delivering herself of rounded periods which would be queer enough in themselves were they not delivered with the oddest rotundity of diction, as of one speaking from a tub, — & in a voice that swells & falls but finally swells like a musical instrument imperfectly controlled. In spite of these curiosities of manner & appearance she seemed perfectly self possessed, & referred to her stock of book learning, which seemed very large & various, in with the greatest composure. "As Nietzsche says" or, "To quote Dostoevsky", or "In the opinion of the Ned-Cartesians." — Such were her conversational openings, waiting no reason ~~or effort~~ but obtruding themselves spontaneously. "I do not myself feel any doubt as to the nature of the good, nor have I indeed ever felt any doubt upon that point" — this was fired off when the talk was not concerned with anything of the kind. Yet one couldn't dislike her, or dub her a very poisonous variety of the prig. I suppose her to be the family prodigy, fed on books. A living up to now in a dark cave until like a creature deprived of light the complexion of her soul is entirely white. She has the mind gain albino. What is to become of her? I don't suspect her a poet. I imagine her one of those prodigies who quite contentedly continue all their lives, in some country village, to absorb learning, & have their circle of correspondent. Her letters must be portentous. Molly watched her with the oddest mixture of pride & unrestrainers

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What were we thinking of her? Did we realise that these manners & views were only superficial; did we not see how remarkable a product she was — could we not perhaps be made, by artful questions & hints, to see it? Margot is now reading — on Comparative Religions. Margot spent all her life pretending she was a Monk or Rob Roy. We now hesitate whether or not to ask to read her poems.

Thursday 10th July

I have forgotten several people, I see. One is Arundell del Ré, Logans prize young man, devoted to the Cause of good books, & proposing to start a shop in Chelsea for the promotion of them. He intends not only selling on a select principle, but binding, & printing, & providing a room where book lovers can love books. His weakness & paleness did not impress us; but then, perhaps weakness, paleness are the necessary qualities. At a pench too, I think, like most men, he has business qualities, brains enough to be dependable. His most serious contribution to an evening of vague discussion was that he should relieve us of all the business of the Hogarth Press, stock our books, keep our accounts, in return for which we're to give him a few lessons in printing. I suppose something may come of it. Last night I dined at the Savoy Grill Room with Clive. This long since eating a meal was such a serious business to me — long since I had taken part in the great ceremony of dinner with others believing in it, assisting at it & dressing for it. Fish, meat & melon & ~~fruit~~ ices have come to their own again. Clive parted with a good deal of paper money. His appearance never, even now, is altogether smart or worldly; his shoulders are not broad enough, & then his hair — But he was dressed, carried a black cane, & wore a silk hat. Oddly enough ~~my~~ my mind went back to my first sight of him years ago. He looked young &

July 10th

had the unsafe assured manner of one not used to things, only pretending use. This ceremony of eating takes so long that it was of by the time we finished, & the light through the enormous window dusky & almost lamplit. He pointed out to me Picasso & Mdme Picasso making off for the ballet; & behind us sat the little ivory figure of Lopokhova's husband. Thus there was every reason for Clive to feel assured. We drove back to Gordon Square & talked about the problems of literature. On his table lay his "puff" of me in the New Republic: I daresay I should have preferred not to be bracketed with Eliot & Murry. I wonder if I talk nonsense about writing to Clive? On the whole I believe that he has an odd gift for making one talk sense. He's so eager that one should talk sense; his enthusiasm is the engaging thing about him — deducting the tribute of his enthusiasm for me. Moreover, whatever one may think of his taste in life, however one may feel him a little battered & dusky in the pursuit of pleasure, still there's his honesty; his vivacity; his determination not to be bored & not to bore. In his own way he is somehow a figure.

Sat. July 12th

In public affairs, I see I've forgotten to say that peace was signed: perhaps that ceremony was accomplished while we were at Asheham. I've forgotten the account I was going to write out of the gradual disappearance of things from shop windows; & my the gradual, but still only partial re-appearance of things. Sugar cakes, currant buns, & mounds of sweets. The effect of the war would be worth describing, & one of these days at Monks House — but why do I let myself imagine spaces of leisure at Monks House? I know I shall have the books that must be read there too, just as here & now I should be reading Herman Melville, & Thomas Hardy, not to say Sophocles, if I'm to finish the Ajax, as I wager myself to do, before August. But this dreaming of

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of the future is one of the chief sources of our happiness, I believe. There's still a good deal of the immediate past exerting its claims on me. I met Morgan Foster ~~in~~ on the platform at Waterloo yesterday; a man physically resembling a blue butterfly — I mean by that to describe his transparency & lightness. He had been conveying the luggage of 5 Indians from Deptford to Waterloo; Indians seemed to weigh him down. We exchanged compliments on our writing — I'm surprised to find him openly liking a compliment, though its nothing strange in myself; & discussed Altounyan's work a little. He did not at all care for it; no form, no character; no one figure dominating the others. I like Foster very much, though I find him whimsical & vagalous to an extent that frightens me with my own clumsiness & definiteness. Then I bought my bag of coffee, & so up to Katherine, with whom I spent my hour very happily. Indeed, I like her more & more; & think we have reached some kind of durable foundation. Home to a dinner party consisting of the two Altounyans, Ernest & Norah, Carrington (the male), & Herbert Woolf after dinner. Poor scatterbrained A: ~~devel~~ showed the least pleasant side of himself in discussing his novel, which he does not merely with passion but with a conceit that would be irritating if it weren't transparently foolish. ~~He believes himself to be~~ His only anxiety is to find how many people are capable of understanding him; about the merits of his work he has no doubt. & cut short my laborious critical survey of them. Rather coolly, he proposed that we should be his agents, finding publishers for all his works for ever. This is all rather foreign; as I found it foreign, though pleasantly foreign of him, to tell me how many people had wished to marry his sister — "For she wishes very much to be married". 'Yes' she said simply, "if one hasn't a profession, one must marry; one must look after some one." I liked her better than I like him. As for Carrington, he will be a very popular man in the East.

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Sat. July 19th

One ought to say something about Peace day, I suppose, though whether its worth taking a new nib for that purpose I dont know. I'm sitting wedged into the window & so catch almost on my head the steady drip grain which is pattering on the leaves. In ten minutes or so the Richmond procession begins I fear there will be few people to applaud the town councillors drawed up to look dignified & march through the streets. I've a sense of holland covers on the chairs; & being left behind when everyone's in the country. I'm desolate, dusty, & disillusioned. Of course we did not see the procession. We have only marked the sins of refuse on the outskirts. Rain held off till some half hour ago. The servants had a triumphant morning. They stood on Vauxhall Bridge — saw everything. Generals & soldiers & tanks & nurses & band took 2 hours in passing. It was they said the most splendid sight of their lives. Together with the Zeppelin raid it will play a great part in the history of the Royal family. But I dont know — it seems to me a servants festival; something got up to pacify & placate 'the people' — & now the rains spoiling it; & perhaps some extra treat will have to be devised for them. That's the reason of my disillusionment I think. There's something calculated & politic & insincere about these peace rejoicings. Moreover they are carried out with no beauty, & not much spontaneity. Flags are intermittent; we have what the servants, out of Mobbishness, I think, insisted upon being, to surprise us. Yesterday in London the usual sticky stodgy conglomerations of people, slapy & torpid as a cluster of drenched bees, were crawling over Trafalgar Square, & rocking about the pavements in the neighbourhood. The one pleasant sight I saw was due rather to the little breath of wind than to decorative skill; some long tongue shaped streamers attached to the top of the Nelson column licked the air, furled & unfurled, like the gigantic tongues of dragons, with a slow, rather serpentine beauty.

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July 19th

Otherwise theatres & Marshall were studded with stout glass pincushions which, rather ~~pr~~ prematurely were ~~let~~ all radiant within — but surely light might have shone to better advantage. However night was sultry & magnificent so far as that went, & we were kept awake some time after getting in to bed by the explosion of rockets which for a second made our room bright. (And now, in the rain, under a greybrown sky, the bells of Richmond of ringing — but church bells only recall weddings & Christian services.) I can't deny that I feel a little mean at writing so lugubriously, since we're all supposed to keep up the belief that we're glad & enjoying ourselves. So on a birthday, when for some reason things have gone wrong, it was a point of honour in the nursery to pretend. Years later one could confess what a horrid fraud it seemed; & if, years later, these docile herds will own up that they too saw through it, & will have no more yet — well — should I be more cheerful? I think the dinner at the 1917 Club, & Mrs Besants speech rubbed the gilt, if there were any grains remaining, effectually off the gingerbread. Hobson was sardonic — she — a mamoe, & milky featured old lady with a capacious head, however, thickly covered with curly white hair — began by comparing London, lit up & fetive, with Lahore. And then she pitched into us for our maltreatment of India, she, apparently, being 'them' & not 'us'. But I don't think she made her case very solid, though superficially it was all believable, & the 1917 Club applauded & agreed. I can't help listening to speaking as though it were writing, & thus the flowers, which she brandished now & again, looked terribly artificial. It seems to me more & more clear that the only honest people are the artists, & that these social reformers & philanthropists get so out of hand, ~~wit~~ & harbour so many discreditable desires under ~~refut~~ the disguise of loving their kind, that in the end there's more to find fault with in them than in us. But if I were one of them?

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Sun. July 20th

Perhaps I will finish the account of the peace celebrations. What herd animals we are after all! — even the most disillusioned. At any rate, after sitting through the procession & the peace bells unmoved, I began after dinner to feel that if something was going on, perhaps one had better be in it. I routed up poor L: & threw away my Walpole. First lighting a row of glass lamps & seeing that the rain was stopped, we went out just before ten. Explosions had for some time promised fireworks. The doors of the public house at the corner were open, & the room crowded: couples walying; songs being shouted, waveringly, as if one must be drunk to sing. A troop of little boys with lantern were parading the green, beating sticks. Not many shops went to the expense of electric light. A woman of the upper classes was supported dead drunk between two men partially drunk. We followed a moderate stream flowing up the Hill. Illuminations were almost extinct half way up, but we kept on till we reached the terrace. And then we did see something — not much indeed, for the damp had deadened the chemicals. Red & green & yellow & blue balls rose slowly into the air, burst, flowered into an oval of light, which dropped in minutes grains & expired. There were hayes of light at different points. Rising over the Thames, among trees, there ~~of for~~ rockets were beautiful; the light in the face of the crowd was strange; yet of course there was grey mist muffling everything, & taking the blaze off the fire. It was a melancholy thing to see the incurable soldiers lying in bed at the Star & Garters with their backs to us, smoking cigarettes, & waiting for the noise to be over. We were children to be amused. So at eleven we went home, & saw from my study Ealing do its best to rejoice, & indeed one fire balloon went so high that L: believed it a star; but there were none showing. Today the rain has left us in no doubt that any remaining festivities are to be completely quenched.

Thurs. 24th July

Well, the peace at any rate is over; though the poor deluded servants are spending their day out on a bus to see the decorations. I was right: this a servants peace.
Last night we had Forster & the Barrys. It was not the mixture we should have chosen, since Forster would come out better alone. However, such are the penalties of owning a pen. I feel somethy like Horace Walpole who had to limit the visitors to Strawberry Hill to 4 daily — Dan Morgan is easily drowned even by the vivacity of the Barrys. He is an unworldly, transparent character, whimsical & detached caring very little I should think what people say, & with a clear idea what he wishes. I dont think he wishes to be thine in intellectual society. Certainly not in fashionable. He is fantastic & very sensitive: an attractive character to me, though from his very qualities it takes as long to know him as it used to take to put one's Gallipot over a humming bird moth. More truly, he resembly a vaguely rambling butterfly; since there is no intensity or rapidity about him. To dominate the talk would be odious to him. He subsided in a chair; or strolled about the room, turning over the pages of a book. Even when the B's had gone, we made little direct headway. He will come to Athenaeum & we pay his fare. He has only £26 in the bank. I liked his simple way of explaining things. And he hates Stevenson; & makes up his novels as he goes along; I see what I mean about dialogue: there's a lot to say to him, though I dont yet know how to say it. He's absurd at my age, & I feel very middle aged, to be so easily put out & flustered as I am. It takes the form of saying things rashly. "I want to write an article after you" I said. & that wasn't what I meant to say.

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Mes 7th Oct

Home yesterday. The 'docile herds' whom I describe on Peace day are not so deluded after all. They have held the country up for eleven days, I think. We did a little to support them too, & kept one man on strike who would have gone back without our pound. Still, what's to be read in the papers is hardly fit for my private page. I wonder if I could expound the railway strike? What they asked, & what they got? At any rate the strike broke in to our life more than the war did — but I've written my diary intermittently & have it at Rodmell. There's a private strike to record too. I should like to write philosophically & analyse what is no doubt a sign — dont they call it? — of the times. We must think out our position. The question is, are we to fling off in a new direction? What do we want? Now at our age, where youth is not quite over, & discretion is fully blown, but not long reached — its not so easy to know what one does want, I meant to add, but that reflection's two days old. Dear old Nelly came in shyly like a school girl & asked to apologise last night; & I see us settled for life, with Hogarth, Monk's House, & two domestics.

8th Oct

I have no time to fill this page, since I must read my review book, (Landor), read Logans Stories, write a letter or two, & I've let the time since tea slip. I began reading the first volume of my diary, & see it that its second anniversary is now reached. I dont think the first volume makes such good reading as the last; a proof that all writing, even this unpremeditated scribbling, has its form, which one learns. Is it worth going on with? The trouble is, that if one goes on a year or so more, one will feel bound on that account to continue. I wonder why I do it. Partly, I think, from my old sense of the race of time & time's winged chariot hurrying near — Does it stay at them?

Sat. Oct. 11th

Things are once more in swing, though in rather a modified form for me, since I've promised to be careful, which means avoiding the temptation of London, & walking down the sunny dunes at Kew. In spite of cold, the sun is still the sun of holiday & country somehow unfit for the pavements slabs. A record autumn for fineness, I should think, always falsifying the predictions of the Times prophet who is gloomy. For the first time I went up to London yesterday in the first place to buy gloves; in the second to have tea at Nena's flat. A comfortable party there. Seated on the kitchen floor. Julian in a Norfolk jacket & Eton collar looking a responsible Briton; Quentin still amorphous. The dim & dusky flat of James's day is now at the very opposite pole of culture — the pole of sun & brightness. The rooms overflow with children. The books are the incongruous part of the decoration, & Nena professed great contempt for them. "Of course, she said, Lucas, Shakespeare & all that on the bottom shelf, but look at that! Doesn't that give James away?" He has all the right books, neatly ranged, but not interesting in the least — nor, I mean all lusty & queer like a waiters books. The Strachey's with the exception of Lytton are down in the world. Lytton was run into at the Club on coming back — composed, agreeable, permanently shone upon, & completely sure of himself — ah, but infinitely charming into the bargain. Success, I believe, produces a kind of modesty. It frees you from bothering about yourself. He was flattering to me, as usual; but then I'm not a success. Did I not hear from Macmillan today that Mrs Duckworth's charges are prohibitive? To my chance of appearing in America is gone. But I'm showered under with review books; & though

I dont suppose I can pretend that any saying by a publisher is a rebuff. Still I'm suspicious of being almost proof-against Gordon Square ?. I wonder. Yes, I believe that my world of confidence, or rather pleasure is so deep sunk as to bubble up in a day or two even after the any chastening. But this I shall soon be able to test. My review, laboured & well meaning as it was, of Hope's book has so far drawn no letter of thanks from her. I'm not sure that she didn't cherish some boundless dream about it. A whole column, in the middle comparing her with the greatest only. Well, I've had my dreams too. At the same time I'm generally rather surprised by the goodness of reality.

Sunday 19th Oct

A gap of more than a week. Let me see how my hours after tea have been occupied. The Waterlows came last Sunday; on Monday I went up, had my tea at the Club, & met for a second, Molly Hamelton "And when", your novel coming out?"; Tuesday I had to read through 2 volumes of an American scribbler sent me by Murray; Wednesday was crammed with George Eliot, I expect, Nina Lozan & Clive came at 7.30; Thursday I rejoiced in Lozan & Barbara; Friday I had tea with Nina, & supper too, & went to a Promenade; Saturday I heard L. say his lecture & then had poor little Dorothy Hewett up to give her her sweets; & here I am with a clear conscience at Sunday, over my fire, waiting for L. to come in from Sutton. Clearly I cant go through the list: that is an unmanageable demand. Sydney Waterlow is very much pleased with himself. Yet as his ~~he~~ talk becomes more & more complacent, his prospects more & more gloomy, I always fancy

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that I can see a slight wobble in what should be the perfect sphere, like that which used to foretell the collapse of an air ball. He has great designs upon the F.O. nothing less than complete reformation; but if there miscarry he will accept £10,000 a year in the city. But the preposterous man has his endearing absurdity. A third project of his is to settle at Dare & write books in collaboration with Desmond. For ever he clings to the skirts of the Desmonds & Leonards & even Virginias (I'm much admired, momentarily) as if not wholly secure even now. She, Dawks, was squat & vivacious as usual. Some of her intelligent remarks fell flat though — [illegible] supposing a knowledge of Sydney's work. He is respectful to her in her own department, & feels that her capacity is a tribute to him. Sayan & Barbara don't need much licking into shape: he on the sprightly side, she maternal & bogish, a little to my irritation. After all, few people don't act a part of some kind. Logan was rather more aloof & distinguished than my memory of him. Perhaps he disapproved a little of Clive. Clive certainly intended that he should. He described his entire indolence; & then his pleasures: "We dine not very well, & then slip into bed together:" Goodness no — I don't read in a system — goodness gracious, I don't waste every day." — So on. New Logans Epicurean life is well regulated; [illegible] ment is not despicable in his eyes; his conversation is decorous. We got out 12 volumes of Gibbon, & they cassed passages. We have undertaken to get Logan's stories printed.

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Wednesday
Oct 21st

This is Trafalgar day, & yesterday is memorable for the appearance of Night & Day. My six copies reached me in the morning, - five were despatched, so that I figure the leaks of five friends already embedded. Am I nervous? Oddly little; more elated & pleased than nervous. In the first place, there it is, out & done with; then I read a bit & liked it; then I have a kind of confidence, that the people whose judgement I value will probably think well of it, which is much reinforced by the knowledge that even if they dont, I shall pick up & start another story on my own. Of course, if Morgan & Lytton & the others should be enthusiastic I should think the better of myself. The bore is meeting people who say the usual things. But on the whole, I see what I'm aiming at; what I feel is that this time I've had a fair chance & done my best; so that I can be philosophic & lay the blame on God. Lovely autumn days, come one after another; the leaves hanging like rare gold coins on the trees. Clive was at the [redacted] Club yesterday, & talked attentively to me, but to the whole room in reality. Some of whom judged him a little flounder, I suppose, & turned round & thanked God when he left the room.
O yes, I should like a good long review in the Times.

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Thursday 23rd Oct.

The first fruits of Night & Day must be entered "No doubt a work of the highest genius" Clive Bell. Well he might not have liked it: he was critical of the Voyage Out. I own I'm pleased; yet not convinced that it is as he says. However this is a token that I'm right to have no fears. The people whose judgment I respect won't be so enthusiastic as he is, but they'll come out decidedly on that side, I think. Moreover, in a way which I can't depend to L; I do respect Clive's judgment. It's erratic, but always springs from a direct feeling. I think I feel most doubtful about Morgan: after getting his report I shall be quite at ease. Three or four people count, & the rest, save as a senseless clapping of hands or hissing, are nowhere. ~~Such~~ No one of much intelligence, outside my own friends, is likely to read a very long novel. But I must stop; I'm at my back work, & ka dines here, & I can't spare time to describe my concert last night. Only room for my own praises. Besides, I must thank C.

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Thursday Oct. 30th

I have the excuse of rheumatism for not writing more; & my hand tired of writing, apart from rheumatism. Still, if I could treat myself propensionally as a subject for analysis I could make an interesting story of the past few days. of my vicissitudes about N. & D. After Clive's letter came Nevas — unstinted praise; on top of that Lyttons: enthusiastic praise; a grand triumph; a classic; & so on; Violets sentence of eulogy followed; & then, yesterday morning, this line from Morgan 'I like it less than the V. O.'. Though he spoke also of great admiration, & had read in haste & proposed re-reading, this rubbed out all the pleasure of the rest. Yes; but to continue. About 3 in the afternoon I felt happier & easier on account of his blame than on account of the others praise — as if one were in the human atmosphere again, after a blissful roll among elastic clouds & cushiony downs. Yet I suppose I value Morgan's opinion as much as anybodies. Then there's a column in the Times this morning; high praise; & intelligent too; raging among other things that N. & D. though it has less brilliance on the surface, has more depth than the other; with which I agree. I hope this week will see me through the reviews I should like intelligent letters to follow; but I want to be a writing little stories; I feel a load off my mind all the same.

The rheumatism made me visit the region which is in my mind the mediaeval region. Clive banting I was going to say like a ruddy sun last night; but I wasn't altogether in the mood, nor he either. The most selfish of men, in some way; though I don't know why that struck me. Letting his mood have its way, indifferent & frivolous. But I pinned his down, & made him talk about N. & D. which he did, absent mindedly at first; later he warmed to his task; but he was thinking of a jolly time in Paris.

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Sat. Nov 1st

Shall I ever again get time for writing here? Never have I been so pressed with reviewing, for there's George Eliot to fill up all crannies left by other books, & Murry to choke effectually any empty space remaining. I think I might slack off if Maud succeeds. No more letters or reviews. A cheque for £25 though, on copies sold before publication. Happily the book begins to recede from the front grey mind, & I begin to be a little surprised if people speak yet (not that anyone has — but meeting Mrs Champcommunal yesterday, I was glad she'd not heard yet). This lady whose name I shall never write again, wishes to share Tregarthen: the play may be the perfect one. She is a grenadier ya woman, high red cheek bones, thin, competent, handsome, unhappy, tailor made & up to date. I met her at Regent Square — all lights out; a single candle, electricians insistent. Sometimes I wish that the old laws & life held good. a husband, a home, servants, entablishments. That same afternoon I looked in at the London Group; but saw nothing save people I had no wish to see; ran into Noel Olivier walking through the squares. November descends. Squares new monthly out; & now —. Middlemarch!

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Monday
Nov 4th

And now I only steal time from an hour dedicated to Stokes poems before Miss Green arrives & we plod off in the foggy cold to address the guild upon the Russian Revolution. The hard rubbed surface of the lower middle class mind, does not attract me. This refers partly to Mr Osborne. I'm critical intellectually of the aristocrats but sensually they charm. I was hauled out of the background to talk to Katie at the Richmond's concert on Sunday. Her beautiful blue eyes all bleared & blood shot now, her skin soft like the skin on an old apple: like an apple's creased at the edge of the mouth, baggy here & there. What sorrow she has had to make her look sad I don't know. The following dialogue went forward.

K. The Cecils have given up their house – couldn't afford it –

V. But he has ~~10~~, £5,000 a year!

K. No such thing; besides everyone must economise. My dear Virginia, the end is coming. A la lanterne!

V. For you I doresay; not for me.

K. Ah, there's where you mistake. I go first, but you directly after.

V. Well, after 300 years of Langleat, you deserve it.

K. It was so beautiful – you don't know how beautiful –

V. You rode?

K. I walked in the woods. We had music. I used to read; & always beautiful things to look at; always something new, never the same thing twice over. I had it for 13 years; & I used to say I wished I could die when it was over: I wish I had.

V. But you haven't done so badly.

K. I didn't care for Egypt. I don't care for that sort of thing – 2 men running before my carriage. I envied them – the only people who got any exercise.

Civilisation is at an end. My father always warned us. I've read history. We're all going to go. Painters will be only people wanted – to paint bodies pretty patterns. No one means to work. There'll be no clothes –
So we talked in the intervals of Mozart.
This is the daily talk in Mayfair I suppose. The seemed to be convinced yet; almost grown indifferent: her one desire to save something for her son, & to die before the crash. But spoken with a kind of humorous resignation which foretells a gallant death on the scaffold.

Thursday, Nov. 6th

Sydney & Morgan dined with us last night. On the whole, I'm glad I sacrificed a concert. The doubt about Morgan & N. & D. is removed; I understand why he likes it less than V. O.: & in understanding see that this not a criticism to discourage. Perhaps intelligent criticism never is. All the same, I think writing it out because I write so much criticism. What he said amounted to this: N. & D. is a strictly formal & classical work: that brings one requires, or he requires, a far greater degree of lovability in the characters than in a book like V. O.: which is vague & universal. None of the characters in N. & D. is lovable. He did not care how they routed themselves out. Neither did he care for the characters in V. O.: but there he felt no need to care for them. Otherwise, he admired practically everything: his blame ~~is not~~ does not consist in saying that N. & D. is less remarkable than t'other. O & because it has in plenty – in fact, I see no reason to be depressed on his account. Sidney said he had been completely upset by it; & was of opinion that I had on this occasion 'brought it off'. But what a bore I'm becoming! Yes, even old Virginia will skip a good

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of this; but at the moment it seems important. The Cambridge Magazine repeats what Morgan said about Dickens & the characters; yet I am in the forefront of contemporary literature. I'm cynical about my figures, they say: but secretly they go into detail. Morgan who read the Review sitting over the gas fire, began to disagree. So all critics upset us, & the wretched author who tries to keep control of them is torn asunder. For the first time this many years I walked along the river bank between ten & eleven. Yes, it's like the Hunt up house I once compared it to: the room with its dust sheets on the chairs, the fishermen are not out so early; an empty path; but a large aeroplane in business. We talked very easily, the proof being that we (I suppose) did not mind silences. Morgan has the artist's mind; he says the simple things that clever people don't say: I find him the best critic for that reason. Suddenly out comes the obvious thing that one has overlooked. He is in trouble with a novel of his own, finishing the keys but only producing disorder so far. He is anxious to begin again & moderate reviewing. We timed our walk admirably for him to catch his train. We have promised to go to the Hutchinsons tonight: but as L. is at the Fabian Conference & there's something disagreeable to me about that circle which makes me reluctant to go alone, I don't suppose we shall.

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Sat. Nov. 15th

It is true that I have never been so neglectful of this work since I think I can foresee in my reluctance to trace a sentence not merely lack of time & mind tired of wanting, but also the other slight disturbance which betokens a change of style. So an animal must feel at the approach of spring when his coat changes. Will it always be the same? Shall I always feel this quicksilver surface in my language; & always be shaking it from shape to shape? But if this is so, this only part cause of my neglect. There have been substantial difficulties. We were with Lytton last Sunday; on Monday I was at Harrisons, & back just in time for Noll H. (to distinguish her from Molly M.): Tuesday I wrote letters; Wednesday at a concert with Violet Dickinson immediately after; Thursday Molly M., for tea & after tea; Friday to Margaret & Lilian, & so here I am, sitting after Saturday tea, a large warm meal, fish & currants & sugar & hot tea cake after a long cold walk. If I shut my eyes & thought of Tidmarsh, what should I see? Carrington a little absorbed with household duties, secreting cancers in the attic; Saxon mute & sealed till Sunday night, when he flowered for a time & talked of Greek; Lytton – a more complex situation. Good & simple & tender – a little low in tone; a little unsatisfied. If I'd married him, I should surely be thinking. I should have found him querulous. He would have laid too many ties on me, & been deprived a little of me had broken free. He was in his usual health (as they say); but the sense of living so much for health, & assembling so many

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comforts round him with that object is a little depressing. But I always qualify these strictures, which I'm quick to find I know, with some subconscious idea of justifying myself. I need no justification: ~~though~~. And what I feel for Lytton is as true as ever it was. We set alone over the fire & rattle on, so quick so agile in our jumps & circumventions. Lytton ~~is one~~ I suppose if one cared dissolve all extraneous surroundings has in the centre of him a great passion for the mind. He cares for more than literature only. On his table were the latest editions of Voltaire. His books were as primly ranged & carefully tended as an old maids china. He talked of his own work not optimistically, but one must discount the effect of my perhaps excessive optimism about my own writing. I was in the vein to feel very highly 'creative', as indeed he said he thought me. But he declares himself entirely without that power. He can invent nothing, he says; take away his authorities, & he comes to a full stop. Perhaps this is true of all strachey, & accounts for the queer feeling — which I will not analyse, since in Lytton's case the rightness, the subtlety, the fininess, of his mind quite overcome my furtive discomfort. Moll H: still strains at her leash like the spaniel of my legend; but foams with enthusiasm for Na. W. This a rough eager mind, bold & straightforward, but O dear — when it comes to writing! Her courage impresses me; & the sense she gives of a machine working at high pressure all day long — the ordinary able machine of the professional working woman. A tailor-made coat costing £16 is essential she said to exact respect in an office. That shows her competent grasp upon life — But why do I always like people in & so throw out my judgments? It is true that I always do.

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I think Violet Dickinson must be skipped, save that I may note how she has been grave-finding in France & planting Lady Horner's rosemary's upon German tombs. All this she enjoyed highly, in her humorous spouting way & had been most touched by an inscription she found telling how Ainsworth, a the hussars had loved his life & loved his ~~dog &~~ horse & dog. So we skip to Molly who took her tea in the kitchen & drew an amazing sketch of Leuche Gerald Ritchie gone mad & rushing in taxis from fruiterer to fruiterer to buy melony which he showers on his friends in a unnecessary of good temper, pronounced madness by the doctors since he is positively rude to his wife.

Lastly, we approach the heights of Hampstead — the immaculate & moral heights of Hampstead. Had I the energy left I would write out that scene of revelation — explanation with Margaret, since in 30 minutes we traversed more ground than in the past 3 years. Tentatively she began it — how Janet & she felt that perhaps — they might be wrong, but still in their view — in short my article on Charlotte Brontë was so much more to their liking than my novels. Something in my feeling for human being — some narrowness — some lack of emotion — here I blazed up & let fly. So you go on preaching humanity, was the first of what I said, when you're withdrawn, & preserve only the conventional idea of it. But it's you that are narrow! she retaliated. On the contrary, I shiver & shrink with the encoming contest as I step up your stairs — I? But I'm the most sympathetic, the most human, the most universal of people. You grant that Janet moralises? I said. O yes, she granted that readily. But the idea of herself as a forcible intense woman, excluding the greater half of

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of the human heart staggered her. She took the blow well. It was as if one had suddenly drawn some curtain. She must think it over, & write to me she said. I plunged down the hill to Lilian's bedside, & she in her serene quiet way said "Ah, I'm glad you told Margaret that; she never will let me say it."

Friday 28th Nov

This gap can easily be accounted for by recalling the old saying (if it is one) that when things happen, people don't write. Too many things have happened. Within this last fortnight the International Review has come to an end; both servants are going; two publishers have offered to publish N. & W. & V. O. in America; Angelica has stayed with us; Mrs. Brewer has told us that she means to sell ~~the~~ Hogarth & Suffield, & we are considering buying them both — together with a greater number than usual of dinners, & letters, telephone calls, books to review, reviews of my book, invitations to parties & so forth. It was the dinner parties that led Nelly to give notice last Monday. She did it in a tentative boastful way, as if to show off to someone behind the scenes which makes me think she would be glad now to change her mind. She would this moment if I asked her. But on the whole I'm not going to ask her. Let alone the recurring worry of these scenes we both incline to try a new system of dailies, which never ceases to attract us & what with Rodmell & a lesser income from the I. R. now becomes desirable. My opinion never changes that our ~~how~~ domestic systems is wrong; & to go on saying this only breeds irritation. We mean to make the attempt now. No one could be nicer than Nelly, for long stretches: at this moment she gives Angelica her bath, & is perfectly friendly & considerate to me; but think of Rodmell — think of the summer ~~we~~ she offered to go to Charleston! But the fault is the drawbacks are too great.

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more in the system of keeping two young women chained in a kitchen to loze & work & suck their life from two in the drawing room than in her character or in mine.
Perhaps I think this our chief event, since I put it first. But the chief event should be the I.R. I'm on the whole glad that we draw our £250 for half L's work. That is the solution so far — an amalgamation with the Contemporary. So many afternoons I walked alone, so many evenings L. sat reading proofs or papers; to me the red magazine & on the first of the month seemed scarcely worth all of him that he gave. But they to have thrown that away is falling too, & the Rowntree methods of making arrangements is to — smash everything with his heavy hooves. Then I was considerably pleased with the American publishers. & that the old V.O. should set sail again. It is like going into another form. "Mr Woolf you are now admitted to our society." Get that sort of compliment means very little ~~about~~ so far as praise goes; nor was I ~~more~~ elated for more than 2 hours by Eagles invitation to make his broad yellow production my mouthpiece. K.M. wrote a review which irritated me — I thought I saw spite in it. A decorous elderly dullard she describes me; Jane Austen up to date. Leonard supposes that she let her wish for my failure have its way with her pen. He could see her looking about for a loophole of escape. "I'm not going to call this a success — or if I must, I'll call it the wrong kind of success." I need not now spread my charity so wide since Murry tells me she is practically cured. But what I perceive in all this is that praise hardly warms; blame stings far more keenly; & both are somehow at arms length. Get its on the cards, I suppose, that N & D is ~~on the~~ a marked success; I expect a letter every day from some one

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or other, & now I can write with the sense of many people willing to read. Its all pleasant; lights up the first sentences of my writing of a morning. Today, bearing L.M. in mind, I refused to do Dorothy Richardson for the Supt. The truth is that when I looked at it, I felt myself looking for faults; hoping for them. And they would have bent my pen, I know. Why there must be an instinct of self-preservation at work. If she's good then I'm not. I'm pained to read praise of Legend, a book by Clemence Dane. But it looks as if I had a soul after all; these are revelations, self analyses. I'm reading Ethel Smyth. I wish it were better - (odd that I wrote that genuinely meaning it; but I couldn't have done so with the novels) what a subject! That one should see it as a superb subject is a tribute to her, but of course, not knowing how to write she's mapped it. The interest remains, because she has ridden straight at her recollections, never swerving a getting through honestly, cursorily, but without the power to still & shake the past so that one will wish to read it again. Honesty is her quality, & the fact that she had made a great rush at life; friendships with women interest me.

Friday 5th Dec. Another of these skips, but I think the book draws its breath steadily if with deliberation. I reflect that I've not opened a Greek book since we came back; hardly read outside my review books, which proves that my time for writing has not been mine at all. This last week, & has been having a little temperature in the evening, due to malaria, & that due to a visit to Oxford; a place of death & decay. I'm almost alarmed to see how entirely my weight rests on his prop. And almost alarmed to find how

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~~H~~ intensely I'm specialised. My mind turned by anxiety, or other cause, from its scrutiny of blank paper is like a lost child — wandering the house, sitting in the bottom step to cry. ~~The~~ Night & Day flutters about me still, & causes great loss of time. George Eliot would never read reviews, since talk of her books hampered her writing. I begin to see what she meant. I don't take praise or blame excessively to heart, but they interrupt, cast one's eyes backwards, make one wish to explain or investigate. Last week I had a cutting paragraph to myself in Wayfarer; this week Olive Heseltine applies balm. But I have rather wrote in my own way of 'four Pannionate Snails' than by, as K.M. maintains, Jane

Sat 6th Austen over again

On Tuesday I lunched with the Cecils. Perhaps this is my first appearance as a small Lioness. The Bibesco's wished to meet me. Lord Cranborne has a great admiration for me. Elizabeth was nicer, & less brilliant than I expected. She has the composed manners of a matron & did not strain to say clever things. I thought her slightly nervous when we drew into the window to talk. Perhaps she does not like the woman's eye to rest upon her. She is porky & podgy, with ~~cow~~ the eyes of a currant bun, suddenly protruding with animation. But her animation is the product of a highly trained ~~m~~ mind; a mind trained by living perpetually among more highly trained minds. "Memory comes to take the place of character in the old" she said, discussing Lady W. Nevill. Again, ~~quotation can be to~~ its a help to write things down; but there's a gulf between writing & publishing. This was said, I remember, owing to my rash abuse of Lady Glencinner & Wyndham Tennant. — her Aunt Grove. The turned round, a little uneasily, to disclaim all ~~not~~ admiration for Lady G. I suppose she wishes to stand well with the intellectuals. Bibesco is handsome, amiable, a man

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rather too much of the smooth opulent world to be of particular interest, & his English is too difficult to let one get straight at him. Like all foreigners, he says serious priggish things — "I prefer to believe nothing save what my reason can confirm" — or words to that effect. Lord Robert was congenial as usual, long, loose, friendly & humorous, in spite of the crucifix on his watch chain. Lord Cranbourne much ya ceul in appearance, modest & gentle, with a long sallow face, no chin, & shiny blue coat & trousers. He had been to a lecture at the London School of Economics. I stayed talking with Nelly when the rest were gone — about adders, about servants, George Eliot, & Night & day.

Sunday Dec: 28th

Probably the last entry this year, & not likely to be the most articulate. Twenty two days gap to be accounted for chiefly by illness: first Les which dribbled on; then much in the same way I was attacked — 8 days in bed, down today in the sofa & away to Monks Home tomorrow. It was influenza — what they call a low type, but prolonged, & sponging in the head as it always does. Not much to say therefore, even if I could say it. Indeed since L. started his malarial type, we've seen few people; & I for the last 10 days, none at all. But I've read two vast volumes of the life of Butler; & am racing through Greville Memoirs — both superbly fit for illness. Butler has the effects of paring the bark off feelings: all left a little raw, but vivid — a lack of sap though; & a stage so thinly set as to be dull & bone dry towards the finish. I'm

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struck by the enormous space his 'fame' & books played in a life so bare of human relations. Isn't this 'reputation' the deepest of all masculine instincts? Almost at the end, when people began to praise, his life put forth a little flower; but too late. For such a critical & contemptuous mind, the value attached to reviews seems queer. Why, I don't think half or quarter so much of mine! But then he had indifference & silence for his lot; perhaps the most trying. It dont (the life I mean) increase one's respect for human nature. Here was someone I expected to admire greatly, & the pettinesses are therefore more devastating than in the case of another. Festing Jones apes him to perfection. An effective style in this way; save that it becomes too mechanical.

Here I run on, but must stop. Oh yes, I've enjoyed reading the last years diary. I shall keep it up. I'm amazed to find how its grown a person, with almost a face of its own.

His book not yet out; but we have six copies in advance. Negotiations proceeding for the sale of Hyde Park gate & the purchase of this & Suffield. Servants determined to stay for ever & ever. No news of the sale of N. & W. Reviews a good deal affected by Massingham. But private opinion highly pleasing to me. I see the public becomes a question. S.R. amalgamated with contemporary. S.L. to keep his office in his virgins. We think we now deserve some good luck. Yet I daresay we're the happiest couple in England.